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Appendix I.1: St Mary's, Abingdon Abbey, Oxfordshire

Introduction

Abingdon Abbey was founded in 675, and re-founded in 955 by Æthelwold, later Bishop of Winchester, as an exemplar of the Monastic Reform movement. He oversaw the construction of a new church on the site which early sources suggest had a tower-nave form. The quality of the evidence from a 1922 excavation of the abbey is poor (summarised in Biddle *et al.* 1968, 60-68) and subsequent excavation work has done little to improve our understanding of the Anglo-Saxon abbey (Allen 1990; Roberts 1994; Moore 1999). The suggested tower-nave collapsed during the wholesale rebuilding of the Abbey at the end of the 11th century, and its location is unknown.

DeScription

The pre-Reform abbey

Æthelwold was granted the minster church and estates at Abingdon in 955 by King Eadred (946-55), but the minster before that date is obscure. Founded in 675, the earlier 10th century the abbey was populated by secular priests under a *presbyter* rather than an abbot. It had become part of a royal residence on the site, and was the beneficiary of the wealth and patronage of kings Athelstan (924-39) and Edmund (939-46), but on Edmund's death the Abbey's later written sources describe it as lying abandoned with its possessions largely dispersed (Stenton 1913, 30-44; Thacker 1988).

Whether the abbey went from a state of wealth to one of desolation in only a few years is debateable, especially since the Abbey is recorded as having retained an extensive estate of 40 hides upon its refoundation in 955. Indeed, the late 10th century *Life* of Æthelwold records that:

The king [Eadred] also gave his royal estates in Abingdon, the hundred hides, with excellent buildings, to the abbot and the monks.

Dedit etiam rex possessionem regale quam in Abbandonia possederat, hoc est centum cassatos, cum optimis aedificiis, abbati et fratribus.

(*Vita Sancti Æthelwoldi* 11; Lapidge and Winterbottom 1991, 20-1).

The suspicion is that the post-955 Abbey exaggerated the deterioration of its predecessor in order to emphasise both the triumph of its own Reform and the munificence of King Edgar. This discussion is relevant because the extent to which the

existing buildings of the pre-955 minster survived to be used under Æthelwold has a bearing on the problematic location and identity of the Abbey's tower-nave church.

The tower-nave of St Mary

The sources for this structure are as follows:

One day the king [Eadred] visited the monastery to oversee the building works in person. With his own hands he measured all the foundations of the monastery according to his plan for the erection of the walls.

Venit ergo rex quadam die ad monasterium, ut aedificiorum structuram per se ipsum ordinaret; mensusque est omnia fundamenta monasterii propria manu, quemadmodum muros erigere deceuerat.

(*Vita Sancti Æthelwoldi* 12; Lapidge and Winterbottom 1991, 22-3).

This work was delayed by Eadred's death in 955, but was completed by Æthelwold by c. 962 and dedicated to St Mary (*Vita Sancti Æthelwoldi* 13; Lapidge and Winterbottom 1991, 25). An Abingdon charter dated 956 (S 607) implies that construction had indeed resumed: it records the granting of timber 'for the building of the church of the Holy Mother of God' (*ad architectandam sanctam Dei genitricis ecclesiam*) (Gem 1975a, 8).

The form of the church laid out by King Eadred and completed by Æthelwold is suggested by the *De Abbatibus Abbendoniae*. Written in the 13th century, it is now thought to contain a core of mid-12th century or earlier information (Hudson 2007, lvi). It describes the church as having:

A round chancel, a round nave twice the length of the chancel, and a round tower also.

Cancellus rotundus erat, ecclesia et rotunda, duplicem habens longitudinem quam cancellus: turris quoque rotunda erat.

(Stevenson 1858b, 277-8; trans. Fernie 1983, 108-9).

The *Abingdon Chronicle* (ii. 28) relates the accidental demolition of a tower belonging to Æthelwold's church, presumably the same church described in the *De Abbatibus Abbendoniae*:

The abbot [Reginald, 1084-1097] decided to enlarge the old church [of Æthelwold]. The foundations of the work were laid and they were preparing with less than proper caution, to join the new work to the old tower from the eastern side, where a porticus chapel had once been attached but since demolished.

Abbas ueteris ecclesie oratorium amplificare disposuit. Iactoque fundamento operis, dum turri ueteri quod nouiter operabantur incautious quam expediebat unire pararent a parte orientali, qua disiecta porticus innixa fuerat.

(*Abingdon Chronicle* ii. 28; Hudson 2002, 30-31).

The same passage goes on to mention that the tower was stone-built. From this it seems clear that the church of Eadred and Æthelwold was a tower-nave church, since the chancel directly abutted the tower with no intervening nave (Gem 1975a, 8-9; Fernie 1983, 108-9). Finally, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 'C' for 977 records that the Bishop of Crediton died at Abingdon and was buried 'at St Mary's minster... on the north side in the side chapel of St Paul' (Swanton 1996, 122).

The consensus is that this church was a tower-like rotunda surrounded by an ambulatory and adjoined to the east by a chancel, and to the north (and perhaps also the south) by a *porticus*. It may have been modelled on the imperial church at Aachen (section 5.4.1), with which it probably shared a dedication. This accords with King Eadred's direct involvement in the planning of the Abingdon church (Gem 1975a, 8-9; Fernie 1983, 108-9; Thacker 1988, 57).

The location of the tower-nave of St Mary

When the Abbey was excavated in 1922, an earlier church was found beneath the Norman Abbey and on a similar alignment to it (fig. I.1.1). It was *c.* 60 m long by 17 m wide with an apsidal east end, and clearly bears no similarity to a round tower-nave.

Abingdon's original minster church of 675 is described in the *De Abbatibus Abbandoniae*:

It had a length of 120 ft [36.5 m] and was round as much in the western part as the eastern.

Habebat in longitudine c. et xx pedes, et erat rotundem, tam in parte occidentale quam in parte orientali.

(Stevenson 1858b, 272; trans. Fernie 1983, 110).

Excluding the eastern apse, the excavated structure is 130 feet long, which corresponds with this description. Its western end was not excavated, so it may indeed have had a second apse, and been 'round as much in the western part as the eastern'. However, the



Fig. I.1.1 – Reconstructed plan of the Anglo-Saxon church excavated in 1922 beneath the Norman abbey (Biddle *et al.* 1968, 60).

excavated structure is poorly recorded and remains undated, and so cannot be confidently identified, although it must clearly be part of the Anglo-Saxon monastery since it is overlain by the Norman Abbey church. The excavated church is likely to have been standing at the end of the 11th century since its alignment is respected by the Norman church that replaced it.

There are two accounts of the location of the Anglo-Saxon monastic church, both of which contradict the excavated evidence. According to the *De Abbatibus Abendoniae*, the original church of 675 lay to the southwest of the Norman church, in the probable area of its cloister (Stevenson 1858b, 272). On the other hand, John Leland stated in the 16th century that the pre-Norman Abbey was located to the north of the present church, in the vicinity of the Abbey orchard (Biddle *et al.* 1968, 60-68).

This confusion may be ascribed to the fact that the late Anglo-Saxon abbey was a complex of several churches. The *Abingdon Chronicle* (i. 25; Hudson 2007, 46-7) records that a chapel of St Vincent was constructed at the abbey by Ælfhild, a noblewoman alive in the mid-10th century (Thacker 1988, 60-61). This relieves us of any need to try to relate all the written evidence to fit with the excavated church. It is also apparent that several of the pre-955 minster buildings stayed in use and were not demolished after the Conquest. In view of this, Richard Gem (1975a, 8 n.) suggests that the excavated church is indeed the main Anglo-Saxon abbey church, and that the tower-

nave lay elsewhere. This may explain Leland's reference to the Æthelwoldian Abbey being located to the north of the Norman church. Thacker's (1988, 57) suggestion that the tower-nave was an apsidal adjunct to a main basilican church is also possible.

Interpretation

The tower in context

St Mary's Abbey and tower-nave lay on the northeast side of Abingdon (fig. I.1.2). A second early religious focal point in the town was St Helen's church, to the southwest, which is purported to be the site of a 7th century nunnery, founded as a double-house along with St Mary's Abbey. It was re-established under the Abbey in 995 to act as a parochial church, and recent excavations have confirmed its early origins (Allen and Munby 1999). Indeed, St Helen's may have been the original ecclesiastical focus of Abingdon (Biddle *et al.* 1968, 29, 33).

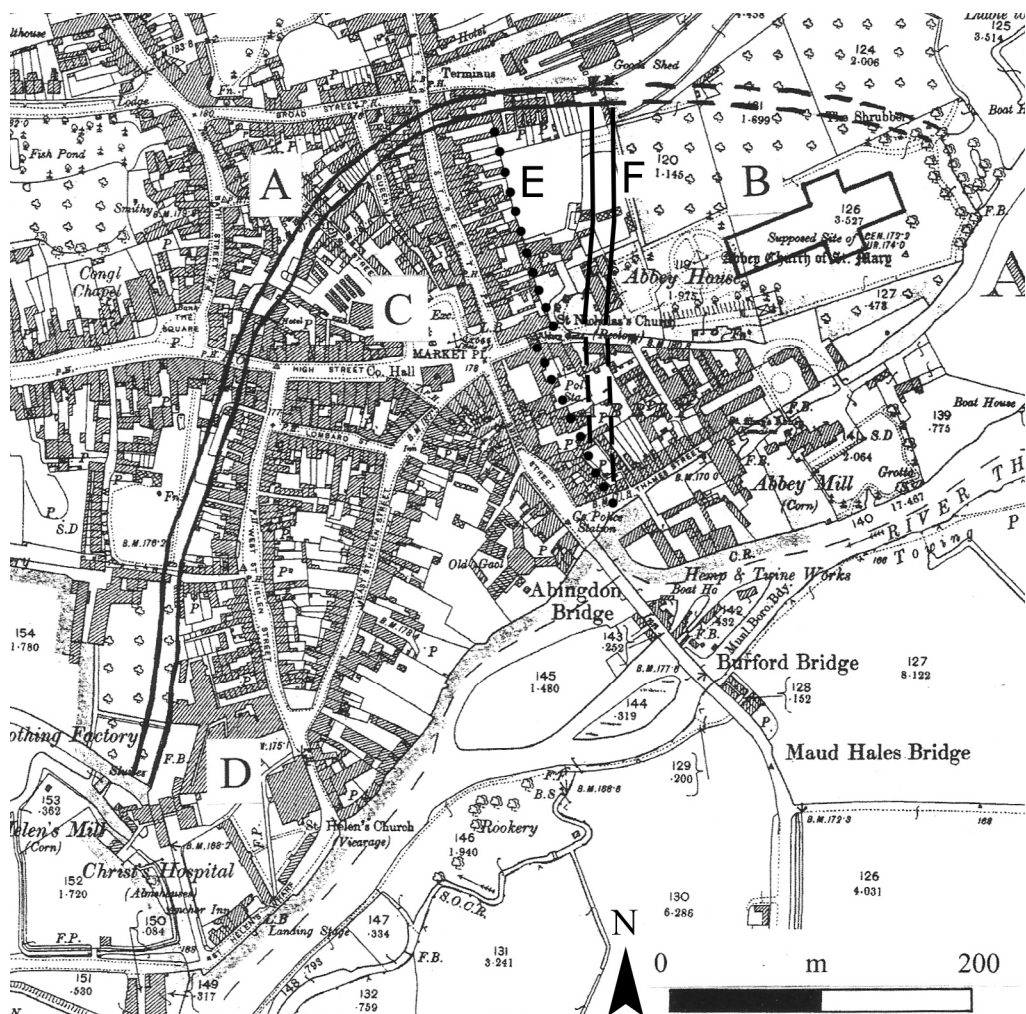


Fig. I.1.2 – First edition OS map of Abingdon. A) Iron Age *oppidum* enclosure. B) Site of St Mary's Abbey. C) Market place. D) St Helen's church. E) 12th century abbey precinct. F) The 'Convent Ditch' (adapted from R. M. Thomas 2010, 50).

Both churches lay within the earthwork circuit of an Iron Age *oppidum* (fig. I.1.2) which survived into the medieval period (R. M. Thomas 2010, 51). The present line of the precinct of St Mary's abbey is probably 12th century in date (R. M. Thomas 2010, 59), which implies that the *oppidum* earthworks supplied some element of Abingdon's Anglo-Saxon monastic *vallum* enclosure. A ditch some 10 m wide, the 'Convent Ditch', may have bounded the late Anglo-Saxon abbey to the west (fig. I.1.2), but its dating is uncertain (Allen 1990, 75).

Abingdon's royal vill

Abingdon's earthwork enclosure may also have enclosed a royal *vill*, the central place of the three hundreds of Horner, Sutton and Ock. These hundreds have a natural geographical unity which seems to preserve an ancient royal territory centred on Abingdon, presumably served by the church of St Helen (Biddle *et al.* 1968, 29). The *Abingdon Chronicle* (B6; Hudson 2007, 240) states that 'here was a royal seat, to this place people gathered when the important and difficult business of the realm was discussed', and indeed a royal *witan* met there in 944 (Stenton 1913, 30-44). King Eadred issued a charter in 950 (S 552) 'at the royal vill of Abingdon'; in a charter of 993 (S 876), Æthelred II mentions a 'royal building' on the 'estate called Abingdon'; a charter of King Eadwig (S 658) dating to 959 states that kings were no longer to construct royal buildings at Abingdon as they had formerly done. Finally, it has been suggested that Æthelwold was tutor to the future King Edgar (*b.* 943) whilst Edgar was resident at Abingdon, which was then granted to Æthelwold for his Reformed monastery in view of this service (Lapidge and Winterbottom 1991, xlv).

Prior to its refoundation, the minster at Abingdon seems to have been closely associated with a royal meeting place and hall. The continuation of this association after *c.* 955 is suggested by the custom of King Eadred to hold feasts there (Hudson 2007, cviii). An authentic charter (S 937) of Æthelred II records that lands belonging to Abingdon continued to be used for the maintenance of royal sons. An early *burh* place-name adjacent to the abbey is also now thought to not only refer to Abingdon's earthwork enclosure, but also to have had the connotation of a high-status defended place, presumably the royal *vill* (R. M. Thomas 2010, 57-8). As Pestell (2004, 59-63, 224) reminds us, we should not be too eager to seek rigid differences in our identification of exclusively secular or monastic high-status sites in the early medieval period.

Further evidence that Abingdon was a royal power centre is the presence of an execution cemetery c. 500 m north of the abbey, tentatively dated to the Anglo-Saxon period (Reynolds 2009a, 103).

It has been suggested that Abingdon's royal *vill* was not located within Abingdon's enclosure, but on the adjacent island of Andersey, or in Culham, two miles to the southeast. The evidence for Culham is confined to the fact that King Coenwulf of Mercia (796-821) held a meeting there, according to a forged charter in the *Abingdon Chronicle* (S 184; Hudson 2007, 250-3; Thacker 1988, 44-6). The evidence for Andersey is rather stronger: according to the 13th century *De Abbatibus Abendoniae*, King Offa (757-96) built a residence there, which was succeeded by a hunting lodge belonging to his successor, King Coenwulf (796-821). Coenwulf's sisters are said to have retreated there to lead a holy life, and King Æthelstan I (924-39) once stayed there. A royal hunting lodge persisted on the island under William I (Lobel 1962, 27-39; Thacker 1988, 44-5). The accounts of Offa's palace and Coenwulf's hunting lodge and royal retreat are unreliable, however, since they are late interpolations into existing sources (Hudson 2007, cviii-cix). More certain is the confiscation of Andersey by William I for his hunting-lodge soon after the Conquest: it was returned by Henry I (Lobel 1962, 27-39). The impression from the earlier and more reliable sources outlined above is that the Anglo-Saxon kings resided and feasted at Abingdon itself.

To summarise, we can be confident that the tower-nave was closely associated with, and quite possibly on the site of, an important and well-defended Anglo-Saxon royal residence, and that it was constructed as one of several churches which comprised Abingdon Abbey. Since King Eadred personally planned and laid the tower-nave out, it is reasonable to interpret it as a royal chapel intended to stand alongside an existing abbey church for the aggrandisement and convenience of the king. Its unusual form may have been advocated by Eadred himself on the basis of existing English parallels, or suggested by Æthelwold using his knowledge of Continental practice: Æthelwold is known to have populated the abbey with a diverse community of monks, including from the French abbeys of Fleury and Corbie (Thacker 1988). By 977 it was in use as a high-status burial-chapel, for the Bishop of Crediton.

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.1.3)

Communication routes

The tower-nave would not have been visible to travellers approaching Abingdon up the Thames from London or passing along the main roads to the east. The tower-nave it

would not have been intervisible with either the ancient ecclesiastical centre at Dorchester or the *burh* at Wallingford. Visibility by road and river from Oxford was better, but it is clear that the tower-nave was not built for prominence in the landscape.

Assembly-sites

Abingdon lies in Horner hundred, which met three miles to the northwest, near Sandford Mill in the parish of Marcham (Gelling 1974, 432-4). The assembly-site of Ock hundred was a short distance to the west of Abingdon, at Ock Bridge (Gelling 1974, 400). Both would have been clearly intervisible with the tower-nave.

Beacon sites

The tower-nave would have had sight of two beacons to the south of the town which were part of a chain stretching across Oxfordshire and Berkshire. However, both these beacons would have been visible at ground level, so military watch was not one of the tower's primary functions.

Fortifications

Abingdon was a fortified place with its Iron Age enclosure and a *burh* place-name: Burford Bridge (*vadum de Burford* 1261-2) (Gelling 1974, 436). The tower-nave was otherwise unrelated to any fortified places in the locality.

Estates

Abingdon and its early minster were probably the focus of the ancient royal estate of *Earmundesleah*, consisting of the hundreds of Horner, Sutton and Ock. Not all this land remained to comprise the estates of the post-Reform abbey, although its holdings expanded dramatically from 40 to 600 hides during Æthelwold's abbacy (Thacker 1988). However, the spurious and incomplete nature of many of the charters of this period mean that the extent of the Abbey's estates by the end of the 10th century are unclear (Lapidge and Winterbottom 1991, 37 n.). Therefore, the Abbey's 1066 possessions from the *Domesday Book* have been used in fig. I.1.3, since this is our earliest reliable source. It shows that whilst much of this land would have been intervisible with the tower-nave, the coverage is by no means comprehensive, and excludes estates bordering the town to the east. It is unlikely that the tower-nave served as an estate-marker.

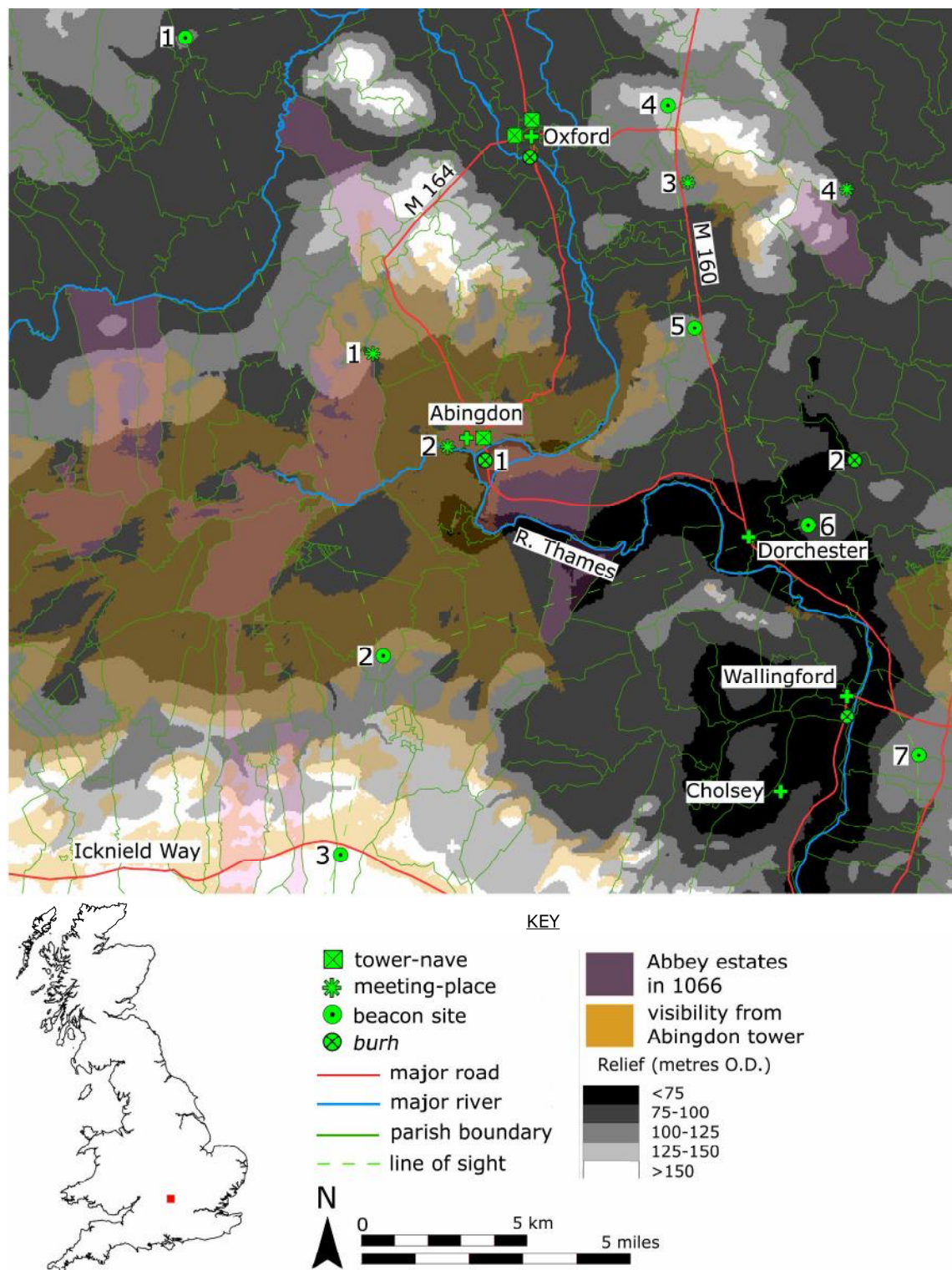


Fig. I.1.3 – The landscape context of Abingdon.

Key to fig. I.1.3

Assembly-sites

1. Horner hundred met near Sandford Mill in the parish of Marcham (Gelling 1974, 432-4).
2. Ock hundred met at Ock Bridge, Abingdon (Gelling 1974, 400).
3. Bulendon hundred may have met at Bullingdon Green (Gelling 1953, 159-60).
4. Bulendon hundred may have met at Bullsdown Barn (Gelling 1953, 159-60).

Beacon sites

1. Weardstige (1005), Eynsham (Gelling 1953, 258-9).

2. Tatlings Mere (*Totlynch* 1390-1), Steventon (Gelling 1973, 421).
3. Cuckhalsley Barrow in Chilton was the major beacon of Berkshire (Hill and Sharpe 1997, 163).
4. Toot Hill Butts (19th century), Headington (Gelling 1953, 30).
5. Toot Baldon (*Baldedone* 1086) (Gelling 1953, 163-4).
6. Warborough (*Wardeberg* 1200) (Gelling 1953, 138).
7. *A pearddune* is mentioned at Newnham Murren in charter bounds dated 966 (S 738; Hill and Sharpe 1997, 162).

Fortifications

1. Burford Bridge (*vadum de Burford* 1261-2) (Gelling 1974, 436).
2. *Kyngesbur'* (1270), a field-name in Newington (Gelling 1974, 132).

Conclusion

A turriform rotunda appears to have been constructed at the royal *vill* of Abingdon at the end of the reign of King Eadred (946-55), under his personal guidance. It seems to have been one of a number of churches at the site, but its exact location is unknown. Abingdon's minster subsequently underwent monastic reform under Abbot Æthelwold, later Bishop of Winchester, who was also responsible for a number of the other tower-naves in this study. Eadred's tower had no obvious wider purpose in the landscape of the Abingdon region, so given both the agency of the king and its location at a royal *vill* it was probably a royal chapel: it was in use as a high-status burial-chapel by 977.

Appendix I.2: St Æthelwine's(?), Athelney, Somerset

Introduction

The former island of Athelney lies immediately to the east of the *Burghal Hideage* fort of Lyng, to which it is connected by the Balt Moor Wall earthwork causeway. The western half of Athelney was refortified by King Alfred (871-899) in 878 as a counterpart to the defences at Lyng (fig. I.2.1), and he used Athelney as a base for his ultimately successful campaign against the Vikings. Lyng failed to develop into a town and contains no known Anglo-Saxon mint or minster. Alfred (re-)founded a monastery on the eastern half of Athelney by 893 to mark his victory (Aston 1984, 183-5), and built a tower-nave church.



Fig. I.2.1 – Plan of the Isle of Athelney and *Burghal Hideage* fort of Lyng (modified from Aston 1984, 183).

Description

William of Malmesbury's early 12th century *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* describes the monastery founded by Alfred:

Athelney is not an island in the sea, but thanks to flooding and swamps it is so inaccessible that it can only be approached on shipboard. A large alder grove there is home to stags, roe deer, and many beasts of the kind. The solid land, only a few hundred metres across, has room for a small monastic church and the monks' buildings. The former was built by King Alfred, who was on one occasion driven out of his province by the Danes but for some time found safe refuge there. Later, when St Cuthbert in a dream went bail for his restoration to power, Alfred promised God that he would build a monastery there. Accordingly he constructed a church, of

only moderate size because of the confined site, but put together in a new architectural style: four posts fixed in the ground hold up the whole fabric, and four apses surround it in a circle.

Adelingea est non maris insula, sed ita stagnorum refusionibus et paludibus inaccessa ut nullo modo nisi nauigio adiri queat. Alnetum in ea permaximum ceruos et capreas multasque id generis bestias continet. Terra solida, uix duobus iugeribus lata, monasterium et monachorum officinas habet. Eius constructor fuit rex Elfredus, qui quondam a Danis pulsus prouintia tutas illic aliquandiu latebras confouerat. Mox, cum per somnium restitutionis suae uadem sanctum Cuthbertum accepisset, ibidem se monasterium constructurum Deo pollicitus est. Fecitque aecclesiam, situ quidem pro angustia spatii modicum, sed nouo edificandi modo compactam. Quattuor enim postes solo infixi totam suspendunt machinam quattuor cancellis opera sperico in circuitu ductis.

(*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* 92; Thomson 2007a, 312-3).

Goscelin of St-Bertin in his late 11th century *Miracula Sancti Augustini* recounts that on his return journey from Rome c. 1024-32 Abbot Æthelwine of Athelney promised that ‘if he should see again the tower of his blessed church’ he would ‘build from the foundations a tower in honour of St Augustine’ (*Si beati temple sui turrim uidere et ad sua se saluum peruinire concedat, ibi prorsus Augustinianam turrim a fundamentis erigere satagat* (quoted in Gem 1995, 41).

Alfred’s church appears to have taken the form of a tower surrounded by four apses. This is supported by William of Malmesbury’s description of it as ‘small’, and his mention of ‘four posts’ (*quattuor postes*), which suggest that it was square. They also imply that it was made of timber. The four apses surrounding it ‘in a circle’ (*quattuor cancellis opera sperico in circuitu ductis*) indicates that an ambulatory surrounded the central tower. The fact that the four posts of the tower were visible may support this theory. Richard Gem (1995, 41-2) suggests that the use of the word *machinam* to describe the structure is indicative of it being a staged timber spire of type known from the Carolingian world. However, Thomson (2007b, 145) points out that the four posts supported the ‘whole structure’ (*totam machinam*), implying that it did not vary in width from bottom to top. Clapham (1930, 147-8) suggests analogy with the church of Germigny-des-Prés, near Orléans, built c. 810, which consists of a square tower surrounded by an ambulatory with apses on three of its four sides (fig. I.2.2).

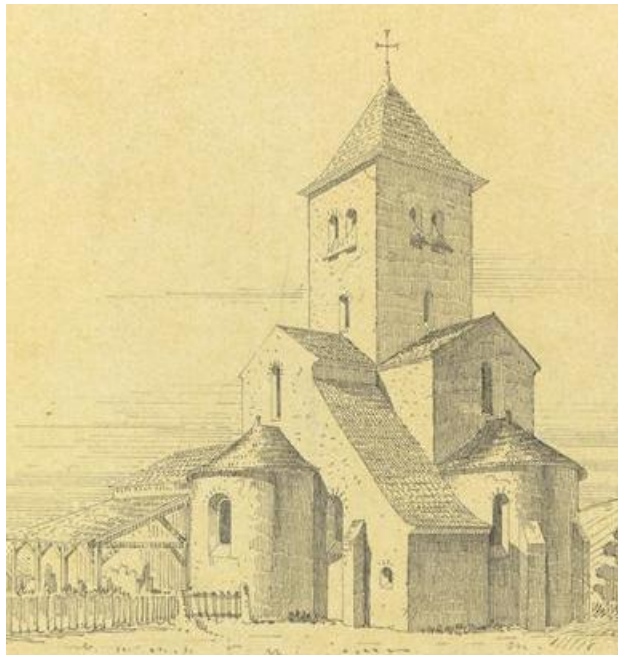


Fig. I.2.2 – The church of Germigny-des-Prés before its 1867 restoration, drawn by the architect Juste Liche (Musée d'Orsay).

Alfred's church survived into the 12th century to be described by William of Malmesbury, and was demolished at an unknown date thereafter. In 1993, geophysical survey located the abbey on the eastern part of the island of Athelney, where a 19th century monument to King Alfred now stands (fig. I.2.3) (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1993).



Fig. I.2.3 – Synthesised interpretation of geophysical surveys of Athelney Abbey (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1993, 11).

Further survey work was undertaken in 2002, which refined the plan of the later medieval abbey church (fig. I.2.4) (GSB Prospection 2002). Interestingly, the lady chapel of the church is out of alignment with the rest of the structure, suggesting that it preserves an earlier building on the site.



Fig. I.2.4 – Refined survey of the abbey church. Note the skewed alignment of the lady chapel (GSB Prospection 2002, 16).

The only recorded excavation on Athelney was undertaken by Channel 4's *Time Team* in 2003. Trenches were placed over the projected line of the defences of the western part of the island, and over the abbey's skewed lady chapel. Unfortunately the results of this work remain unpublished, but from the broadcast programme (series 10, episode 8) it appears that the trench over the abbey was not completed due to the discovery of medieval burials overlying its masonry foundations, so no clear results were obtained. There was, however, an apparent absence of any apsidal structures associated with the lady chapel, which was taken to mean that it was not built on the church of Alfred described by Asser, but was perhaps a secondary church aligned with the Anglo-Saxon abbey. However, Alfred's church was probably a timber structure which may not necessarily have been identified in either the geophysical survey of the abbey or the cursory excavation. Either way, the church of Alfred has yet to be discovered.

Interpretation

The tower in context

Royal vill and pre-Alfredian minster

Athelney was clearly an important place prior to its use as a refuge by Alfred. It was the location of an Iron Age fort and its name *Æbelingaeigge* (878), ‘island of the princes’ (Ekwall 1960, 18) suggests that it was a defended royal *vill*. This is further supported by its location, topography, the lack of many other creditable royal sites in the county, and the age of the earthwork defences (Lavelle 2010, 202-3). The 2002 geophysical survey identified a series of linear ditches defending western part of the island, where the Balt Moor Wall causeway links it to Lyng (GSB Prospection 2002, 2).

There seems to have been a pre-existing monastic foundation at Athelney prior to the late 10th century, which would not be unusual for a middle Anglo-Saxon royal *vill*. The abbey’s foundation charter (S 343) records that Alfred granted land ‘as a help to the monastic life of the monks there under a regular rule serving God devoutly’ (Bates 1899, 127). Although this charter is thought to be spurious, its indication of an existing community is supported by the abbey’s dedication to St Æthelwine, brother of the 7th century King Cenwalh of Wessex. This is also further evidence of the long-standing royal presence on the island (Page 1911, 99-103). Alfred therefore appears to have re-endowed an early royal minster and constructed a tower-nave church on the site. The original church may therefore have remained standing, its alignment perhaps preserved by the lady chapel of the Norman abbey.

Alfred’s monastery

Athelney was one of Alfred’s two principle monastic foundations, the other being the nunnery at Shaftesbury. Athelney’s first abbot was John Scotus of Saxony and the abbey was mostly populated with foreign monks; the abbey was a firm statement by the West Saxon royal house of its adherence to Carolingian monastic life (Hugo 1897, 103-4; Blair 2005, 347). The turriform nature of Alfred’s church may therefore have been in imitation of Carolingian architectural forms, perhaps the royal chapel at Aachen. Either way, the ‘new architectural style’ of his ‘small monastery’ was certainly not determined by the relatively spacious Isle of Athelney, despite William of Malmesbury’s assertion.

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.2.3)

Assembly-sites

The locations of the region’s assembly-sites are unknown.

Communication routes

Athelney sits in the Somerset Levels near the confluence of the Rivers Tone with the River Parrett, which was an important inland trade route in the early medieval period (Blair 2007, 18). A road linked Taunton to the west with Somerton to the east, both of which are had 9th century or earlier origins (Aston 1984). This is likely to have run through Lyng.

Assuming Alfred's tower-nave was constructed on the site of the Norman Abbey, which lay on the highest point of the island, it would have had good visibility along the Parrett for at least seven miles to the north, and along the Tone for five miles to the southwest. It could also be seen at up to five miles' distance along the presumed route of the Taunton-Somerton road. The tower-nave therefore had relatively good visibility and could, *in extremis*, have acted as a watchtower.

Beacon sites

The place-names of Somerset have yet to receive detailed study; general works indicate no beacon place-names in the locality.

Fortifications

Aside from Athelney itself, the major fortified site in the locality was the adjacent *Burghal Hideage* fort of Lyng. The prominent natural mound of Burrow Mump in Burrowbridge lay a mile to the northeast, at the crossing of the River Parrett was also a defensible place, although its name probably derives from OE *beorg*, 'hill' rather than *burh* (Ekwall 1960, 77). It dominates the Somerset Levels, and may have been the site of a Norman castle, although this is uncertain (Dunning 1995). Limited excavation in 1939 failed to resolve the date of earthworks on its summit (Gray 1940; 1942). It passed into the possession of Athelney Abbey in 937 as a detached part of Lyng parish (S 432; Dunning *et al.* 1992, 53).

Estates

Alfred's tower would have made a poor estate-marker. It could not be seen from Long Sutton, the largest estate supposedly granted to the abbey by Alfred on its re-foundation in 878 (S 343): although this charter is probably inauthentic it is now thought to contain genuine material (Keynes 1994, 1134). By the compilation of the *Domesday Book*, Lyng is the only one of the Abbey's estates that would have been intervisible with the

tower-nave; Ilton, Ashill, Seavington, Hamp and Bossington would not have been visible.

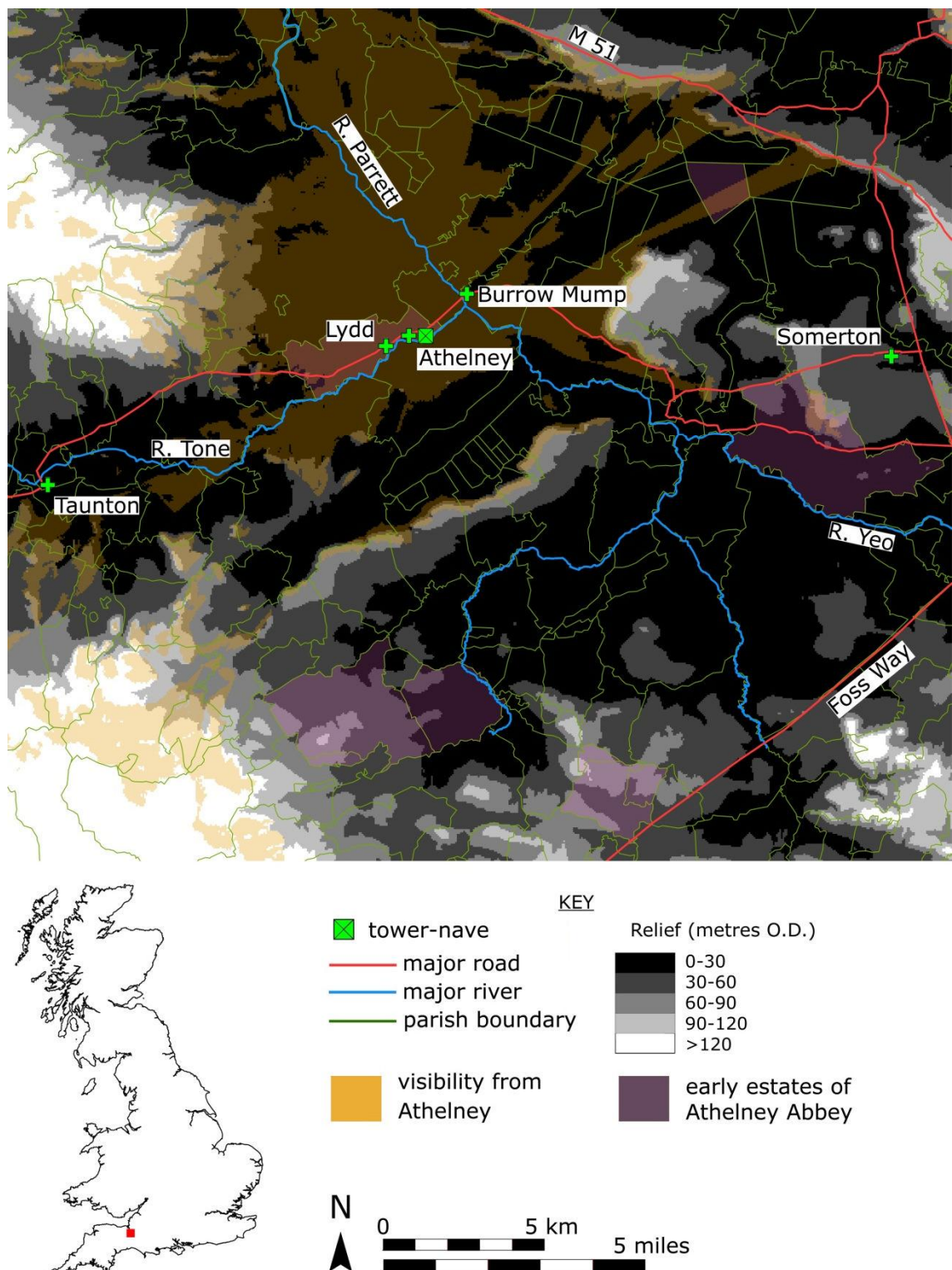


Fig. I.2.5 – The landscape context of Athelney

Conclusion

Alfred's tower-nave at Athelney was constructed on the probable existing site of a defended royal *vill* and minster after his re-foundation of 878. It appears to have

consisted of a square timber tower with four apses surrounding it, and may have been inspired by Carolingian architecture. It is unknown whether it comprised the site's only church, or whether the putative existing minster-church was retained for congregational use. Athelney was significant in the West Saxon imagination as the location from which Alfred mounted his campaign to regain his kingdom and lay the foundations for the further conquest of England. Alfred's tower would have increased Athelney's visibility along the major routes of communication in the locality, but it was not meant to mark ownership over the Abbey's late 9th century estates. Its utility as a watchtower is unknown.

Appendix I.3: St Peter's, Barton-upon-Humber, Lincolnshire

Introduction

The tower of St Peter's church (fig. I.3.1) has been the focus of antiquarian and archaeological inquiry since Thomas Rickman demonstrated that it was of pre-Conquest construction in 1819, the first such example to be recognised in England (summarised in Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 237-251). Declared redundant in 1972, the opportunity was taken to subject the church and its cemetery to a comprehensive campaign of excavation and recording between 1978 and 2005, the results of which are now fully published (Waldron 2007; Rodwell and Atkins 2011).



Fig. I.3.1 – St Peter's church, from the south

Description

The following brief description is drawn from Rodwell and Atkins (2011). The Anglo-Saxon church was originally constructed as a tower-nave with a narrower baptistery to the west and chancel to the east, of which the latter does not survive above ground level (fig. I.3.2).

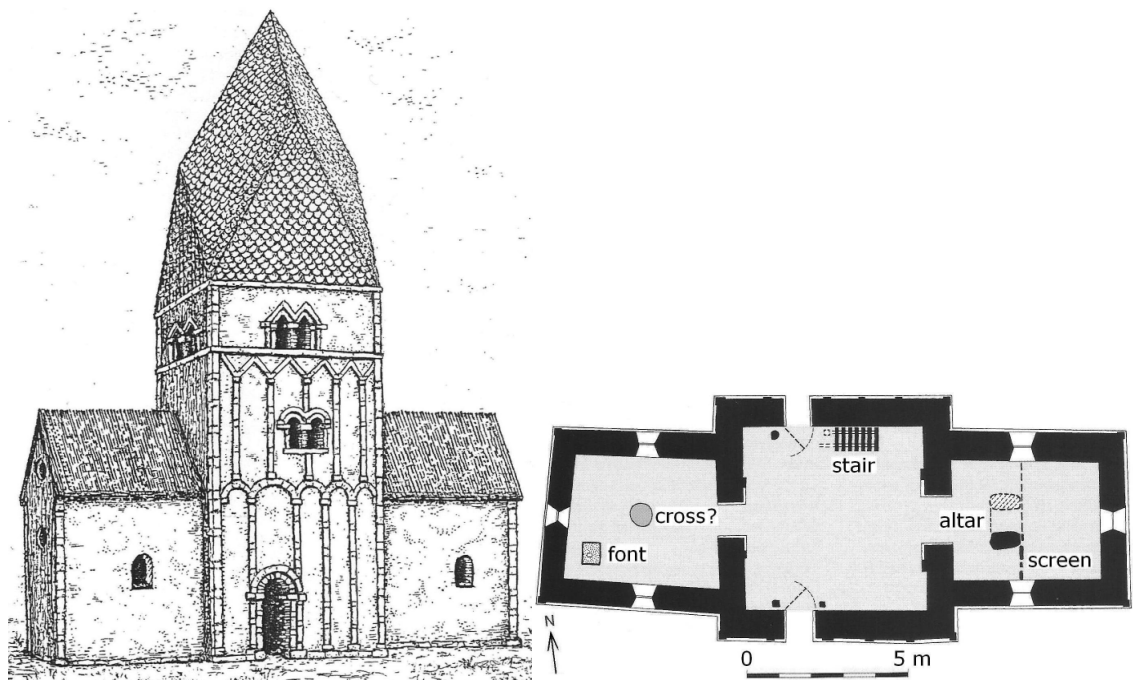


Fig. I.3.2 – Left: Reconstruction of the first phase of St Peter's church, from the south (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 339). **Right:** Excavation plan of the church (adapted from Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 347).

The main body of the tower is 7.2 m square and 14.2 m high to the top of its original fabric. It is constructed of highly decorative pilaster strips infilled with rubble, and is divided into three stages. At ground-floor level it has north and south external doorways, and arches opening east and west into its chancel and baptistery. The second and third stages have a two-light opening in each of their visible faces, the lower round-headed and the upper triangular-headed belfry-openings. This original belfry-stage was topped in the late 11th century by an additional belfry stage (fig. I.3.1), interpreted as belonging to the early Norman group of Lincolnshire towers (Stocker and Everson 2006, 100-103).

The chancel and baptistery both measured *c.* 5.0 m square. The function of the baptistery was revealed in excavation by a probable font-base; the structure also appears to have housed a standing cross. The chancel contained the only burials contemporary with the construction of the tower, thought to be high-status individuals, possibly the founder and his wife. Alternatively, a late 11th century masonry foundation uncovered 20 m east of the tower-nave may represent an elaborate 'founder's tomb' associated with the church and adjacent hall (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 175-6). At first-floor level, the tower had an internal gallery, interpreted as being for liturgical purposes as well as giving access to the belfry stage above as well as to upper doorways to the roof-spaces of the chancel and baptistery.

Notable are marks indicative of the sharpening of implements or weapons on the southern jamb of the chancel-arch and the tower's northwest quoin. The wear is consistent with the sharpening of both flat blades, such as swords, and pointed objects such as arrow-heads. This resembles similar marks on the chancel-arch at Broughton [4]. Usefully, the markings have a *terminus ante quem* of the early 14th century provided by a raise in floor level and an episode of burning (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 387).

The construction of the tower-nave has been dated to the early 11th century on the basis of radiocarbon dates from the church and associated burials. This ties in with the documentary evidence for the fragmentation of the associated monastic estate at Barrow in 1015 (see below). However, one burial (F744) stratigraphically earlier than the tower returned a radiocarbon date of cal. 1025-1165 at 93% probability, which pushes the construction of the tower to at least the middle of the 11th century, although the excavators suggested that this date was questionable on the grounds of possible contamination (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 354). The chancel was replaced by a small nave and apsidal chancel in the late 11th century.

Discussion

The tower in context

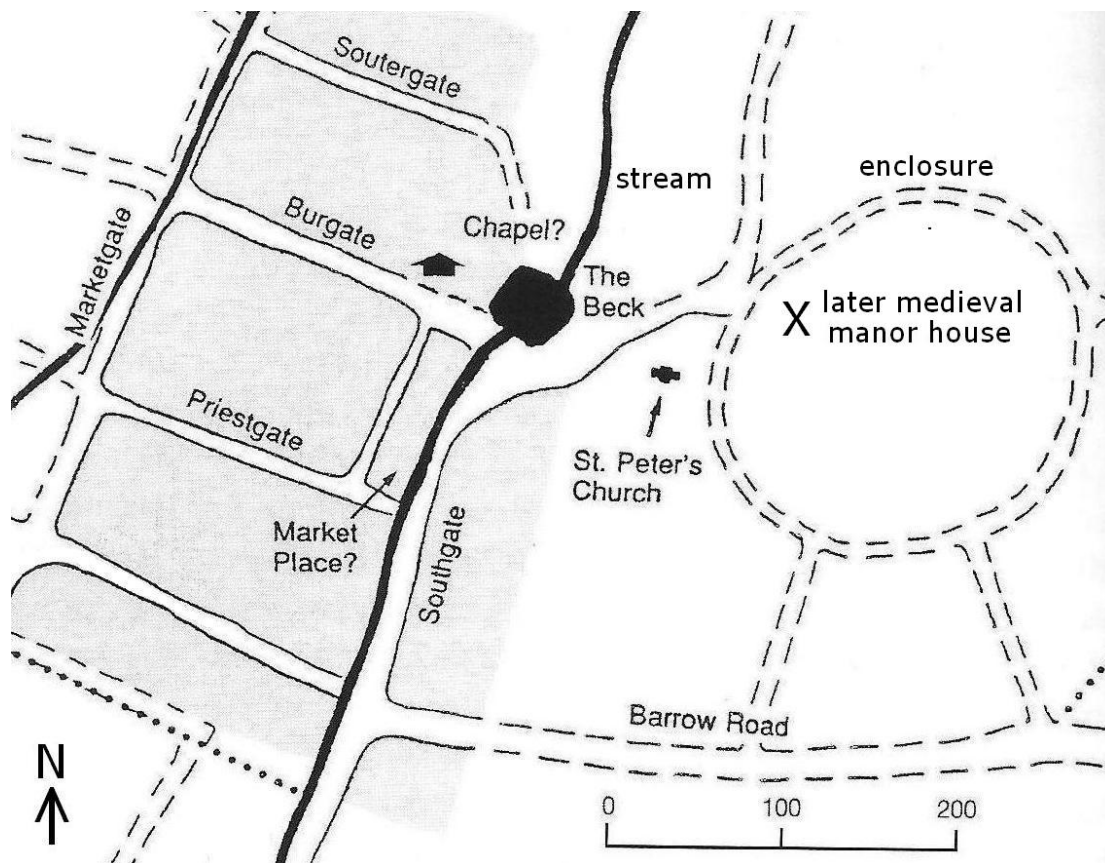


Fig. I.3.3 – Barton-upon-Humber in the late Anglo-Saxon/early Norman period (modified from Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 52).

Barton-upon-Humber before St Peter's

Pre-dating the construction of St Peter's church is a sub-circular banked and ditched enclosure *c.* 200 m in diameter, of broadly middle Anglo-Saxon date (fig. I.3.3). The sizable early Anglo-Saxon cemetery of Castledyke South is located 250 m to the southwest. St Peter's church itself was preceded by early-mid Anglo-Saxon timber buildings, suggesting that the adjacent enclosure contained the settlement site corresponding to the cemetery at Castledyke South (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 4). It was previously thought that the settlement and cemetery were surrounded by a second enclosure, up to 1000 m across, in the Viking period (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 34-5), but excavation has now dated this enclosure to the mid-12th century (J. Bradley 2002, 9-10).

Barton-upon-Humber lies a mile west of Barrow-upon-Humber, the site of an early 8th century monastery founded by St Chad. Until *c.* 1015 the two places shared a parish whose bounds are recorded in a charter of 971 (S 782), which granted the monastery to Peterborough Abbey. This had led to speculation that the early enclosure at Barton-upon-Humber was in fact the site of the early monastery, most recently by John Blair (2005, 360) and Christopher Loveluck (2007, 160). This is now discredited (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 163). The enclosure may therefore have been a defended secular counterpart to the nearby monastery, as would befit its status as the seat of manorial power in the area at Domesday (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 30).

During the late Anglo-Saxon period the focus of the settlement at Barton-upon-Humber moved from the early sub-circular enclosure, which remained upstanding. The new planned settlement focussed on the market-place to the west of the enclosure (fig. I.3.3). A cemetery was established on the later site of St Peter's church during the 10th century, initially characterised by of dispersed burial. This was succeeded by a distinct phase of ordered and relatively dense burials confined to the area directly beneath the later tower-nave. These may represent the burials of a new authority who took over the site of the church shortly before the tower-nave was constructed, and were presumably responsible for laying out the new settlement plan (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 170-3).

Late Anglo-Saxon Barton-upon-Humber and St Peter's tower-nave

The tenurial history of Barton-upon-Humber provides us with a likely context for the tower-nave's construction (Roffe 2011). Barton-upon-Humber lay within the home estate of the monastery at Barrow-upon-Humber, as recorded in the 971 grant to Peterborough Abbey. The name *Barton* ('barley farm') suggests that it originated as a

demesne farm of the abbey. The estate was then surrendered by Peterborough Abbey to the king c. 1013-17, at which time it fragmented into the present parishes of Barrow and Barton and was divided up amongst a number of secular lords. Although St Peter's church may have originated before this date as a chapel serving Barrow's demesne farm, the influx of secular lords after 1013 not only provides a much better context for the construction of a private chapel but also accords with the tower-nave's probable date of construction.

There are two entries for Barton-upon-Humber in the *Domesday Book*. One is of sokeland belonging to Barnetby-le-Wold; the other is as follows:

In Barton-upon-Humber, Ulf had 13 Caracutes of land to the geld. [There is] land for 27 ploughs. Gilbert [de Ghent] has 7 ploughs there in demesne; and 63 villans and 16 bordars with 9 ploughs, and 42 sokemen and 67 bordars with 10 ploughs. There is a church and a priest, and 2 mills [rendering] 40s, and 1 market and a ferry rendering £4.

(Williams and Martin 2002, 920).

By 1066 Barton-upon-Humber was an important holding of Ulf Fenman a king's thegn and landowner of considerable wealth with estates across the East Midlands. Barton-upon-Humber had developed from a monastic grange to an incipient planned town under firmly proprietorial control, with a market and perhaps 1000 inhabitants, which remained a seat of lordly power into the Norman period under Gilbert de Ghent and his successors (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 4).

It is likely that the manorial focus at Barton lay within the sub-circular enclosure to the east of St Peter's church. As mentioned above, the middle Anglo-Saxon settlement had probably centred on this enclosure, but it had shifted west by the 11th century to what would become St Mary's church. The old enclosure is the location of the later medieval manor-house, Tyrwhitt Hall, whose surviving buildings date to the 14th century and later (fig. I.3.4) (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 54). St Peter's church lies adjacent to the main, western entrance of this enclosure. For reasons of its form, location and date, St Peter's church has therefore been interpreted as a status-affording lordly tower-nave associated with the late Anglo-Saxon predecessor of Tyrwhitt Hall.



Fig. I.3.4 – The post-medieval layout of Barton-upon-Humber (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 3).

This interpretation of St Peter's church as a private, lordly chapel is not undermined by any need to house the congregation of a sizeable early medieval settlement, a function for which it would plainly have been inadequate. A hundred metres west of St Peter's lies its dependent chapel of St Mary – originally All Saints' – first mentioned in 1115 (fig. I.3.4). Despite its subservient status, St Mary's was a substantial medieval church, the location of a guild and the centre of the medieval town's civic life. It was also provided with an unusually large churchyard from the start, quite out of keeping with a mere chapel of ease for the adjacent market; the presence there of a rich 11th or early 12th grave-marker supports this. Although the fabric of the present structure only dates to the 12th century, antiquarian excavations revealed an earlier rectangular structure underlying it. It is therefore wholly likely that St Mary's was the site of the congregational church for the developing Anglo-Saxon town, and was rebuilt in the early Norman period (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 10-12, 55-6).

St Peter's sharpening-stones

One further aspect of St Peter's church is worth discussing here. It was mentioned above that the jamb of the Anglo-Saxon chancel-arch and the tower's northwest quoin bear marks at ground level indicative of the sharpening of tools or weapons (fig. I.3.5).



Fig. I.3.5 – Marks on the jamb of the Anglo-Saxon chancel-arch (left) and the tower's northwest quoin (right), indicative of the sharpening of tools or weapons (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, plates 31 & 32).

Very similar marks are present on the jamb of the Anglo-Saxon chancel-arch at the nearby tower-nave at Broughton [4] (fig. I.4.6), which have been interpreted as the result of the blessing of the weapons of the Anglo-Saxon *fyrð*, which mustered at an assembly-place adjacent to the church (Shapland 2008). The hundred meeting-place for Barton-upon-Humber lies seven miles to the south and out of sight of St Peter's, but the coincidence of such similar marks in identical locations at two neighbouring tower-naves is intriguing.

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.3.6)

Communication routes

Barton-upon-Humber lies on the south bank of the Humber estuary, a key route of communications throughout the medieval period, as well as being a route of Danish and other invasions. It probably served the estuary as a minor port, as well as being the location of a valuable ferry in 1086 (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 4). The tower-nave would have been able to act as a watchtower and sea-mark up to ten miles along this important route. However, although Barton-upon-Humber was located near a number of long-distance routes running north towards Yorkshire, including Ermine Street itself, it would have made a poor watchtower inland.

Assembly-sites

Barton-upon-Humber lies in Yarborough wapentake, whose meeting-place was located in the hillfort at Yarborough Camp, out of sight and seven miles to the south of the tower-nave (Cameron 1991, 100).

Beacon sites

The tower-nave was able to watch a chain of early beacon place-names along the Humber Estuary. They may have originated at Barton-upon-Humber itself, although the place-name within the parish is late.

Fortifications

The major fortification in the vicinity of Barton-upon-Humber was the hillfort at Yarborough Camp, also the location of the hundred assembly-site. It was out of sight of the tower-nave.

Estates

The estates of the lord of Barton-upon-Humber in the early 11th century are unknown, but the tower-nave is unlikely to have made an effective landscape marker of these estates.

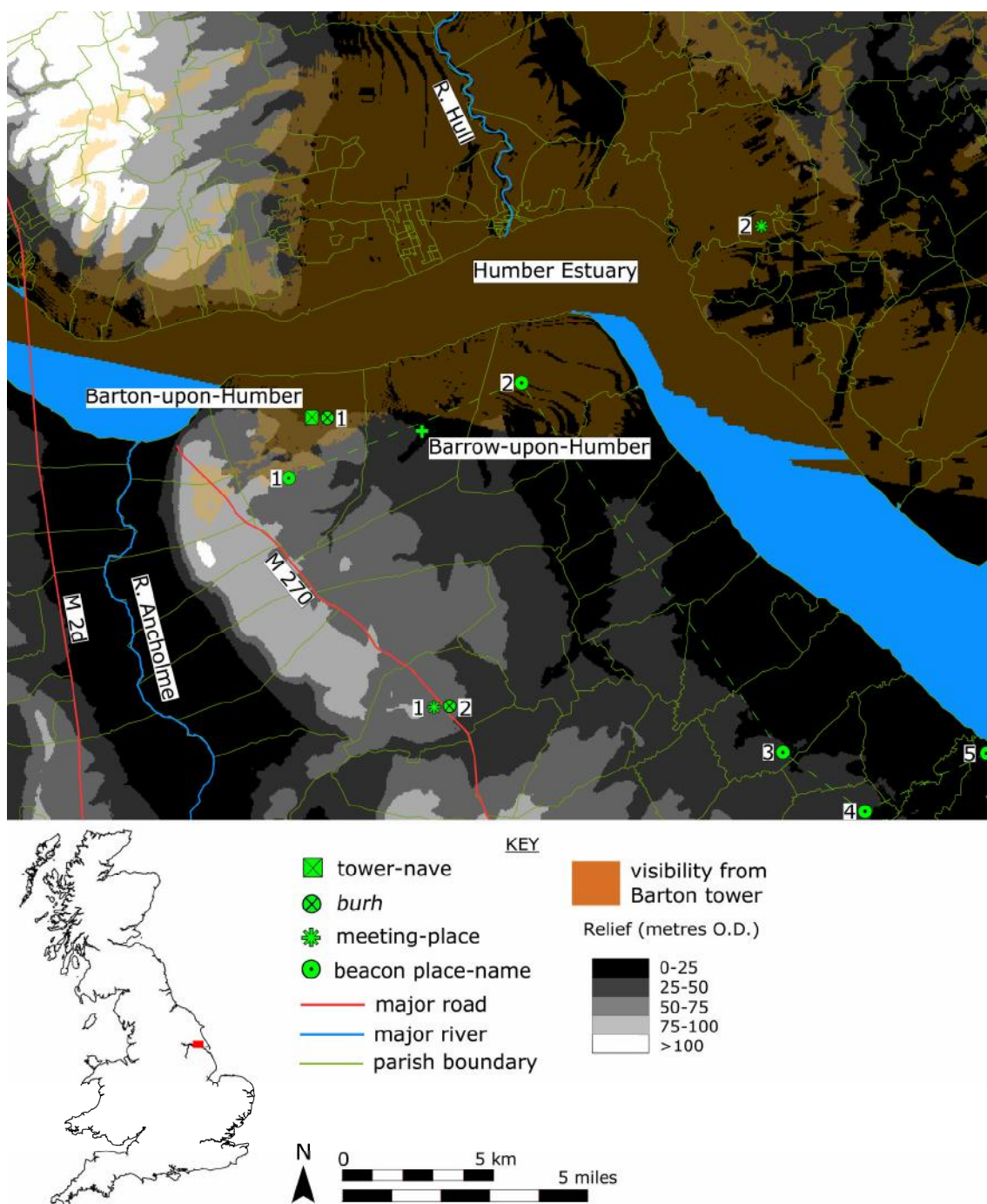


Fig. I.3.6 – The landscape context of Barton-upon-Humber.

Key to fig. I.3.6

Assembly-sites

1. Yarborough wapentake met at Yarborough Camp (Cameron 1991, 100).
2. Holderness wapentake met at Hedon in 1251; the name of the wapentake in 1086 was Heldernes(se), implying this was the traditional place (Smith 1928, 14-15).

Beacon sites

1. Beacon Hill (*Beacon Gate* 1658), Barton-upon-Humber (Cameron 1991, 33).
2. Totney Hill Farm (*Totney Close* 1648), Goxhill (Cameron 1991, 127).
3. Toot Hill (1679), Healing (Cameron 1997, 105).
4. Toot Hill (*Tout Hill* 1757), Little Coates (Cameron 1997, 44).
5. Toot Hill (*Toote Hill* 1825), Great Grimsby (Cox 1994b, 42).

Fortifications

1. Goldburgh (*Goldburgh Wra* 1415), considered a *burh*-name by Cox (1994b, 42-5).
2. Yarborough hillfort has an adjacent field-name *Burghil* (1240) (Cameron 1991, 100).

Conclusion

Barton-upon-Humber was established as a demesne of the early monastery at Barrow-upon-Humber, and was the site of early Anglo-Saxon burial and a middle Anglo-Saxon settlement. By the early 11th century the monastic estate had been divided up amongst secular lords, one of whom used the earthwork enclosure of the early settlement as his manorial centre. The change to proprietorial control resulted in the construction of St Peter's tower-nave church. The cemetery underlying the church also changed at this time from a pattern of dispersed burial to a small area of planned graves which directly preceded the church, and have been taken as further evidence of seigneurial control. The tower-nave itself would have made a useful watchtower over the important and vulnerable shipping-route of the Humber, as well as over a possible associated beacon-system, but would have had a poor view over routes inland and was distant from the assembly-site of its wapentake.

Appendix I.4: St Mary's, Broughton, Lincolnshire

Introduction

Broughton lies in Lindsey adjacent to Ermine Street, ten miles south of the Humber, on the slopes of the Lincoln Edge. The tower-nave of St Mary's church (fig. I.4.1) was identified by Micklethwaite (1896, 333) and has been described by Baldwin Brown (1925, 445), Fisher (1962, 265-8) and the Taylors (1965, 115-6). Most recently it was the subject of a detailed discussion by the author (Shapland 2008), which instigated the present study of tower-nave churches.



Fig. I.4.1 – The tower of St Mary's, Broughton, from the north.

Description

The following description is summarised from Shapland (2008). The church was originally constructed to a rectangular plan measuring 7.3 m east/west by 6.1 m north/south externally, with walls c. 1.0 m thick (fig. I.4.2).

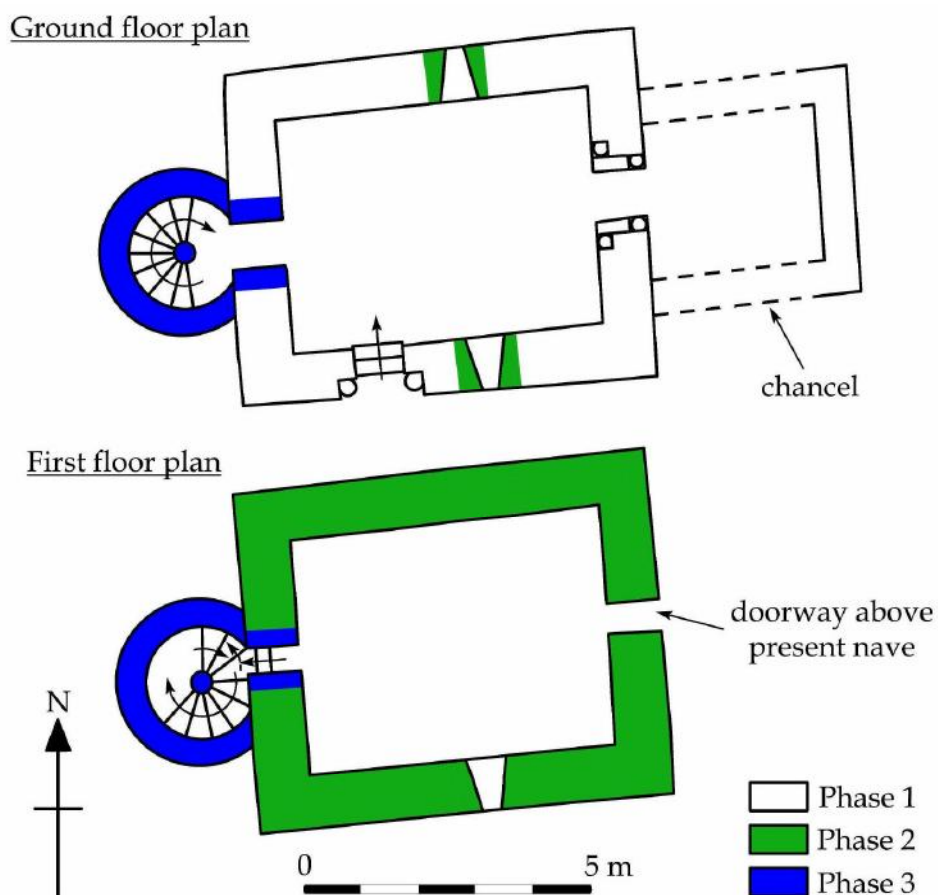


Fig. I.4.2 – Plan of tower space and upper chamber of the tower, with excavated chancel and suggested phasing (Shapland 2008, 474).

It had a smaller eastern chancel, identified by antiquarian excavation (Micklethwaite 1896, 333), and a chancel-arch with its more elaborate side facing west into the tower (fig. I.4.3). The tower is accessed by an equally elaborate southern doorway. Both chancel-arch and doorway are constructed from assorted re-used, probably Roman, masonry. A stair-turret of distinctively early medieval construction (Parsons 1978), formed around a Roman column, abuts the western face of the tower, giving access to two upper stages: a chamber and a belfry.



Fig. I.4.3 – Left: The chancel arch from the tower-space in the early 20th century. Note the sharpening-marks on the northern jamb (Baldwin Brown 1925, 292). **Right:** The tower's south doorway.

The tower's unusual rectangular plan together with breaks in its external fabric suggest that it originated as a conventional single-storey chapel, later heightened to form a tower. The construction of the stair-turret is later than both these phases: it abuts the tower and its addition caused the tower's western belfry-opening to be altered into a doorway. The stair-turret is unlikely to be later than the 11th century in date, which pushes the construction of the tower back to the mid-11th century or before. The tower gained a nave and chancel in the early Norman period.

Interpretation

The tower in context

Broughton's settlement plan

St Mary's lies in the southeast corner of Broughton, directly across the road from the site of Broughton's manor-house (fig. I.4.4). The settlement core is characterised by regular tofts stretching back from each side of the road running through the settlement, indicative of imposed planning sometime during the medieval period. The property boundaries of both the manor-house and church interrupt this regular grid of tofts, suggesting that they pre-date the planning of the settlement.

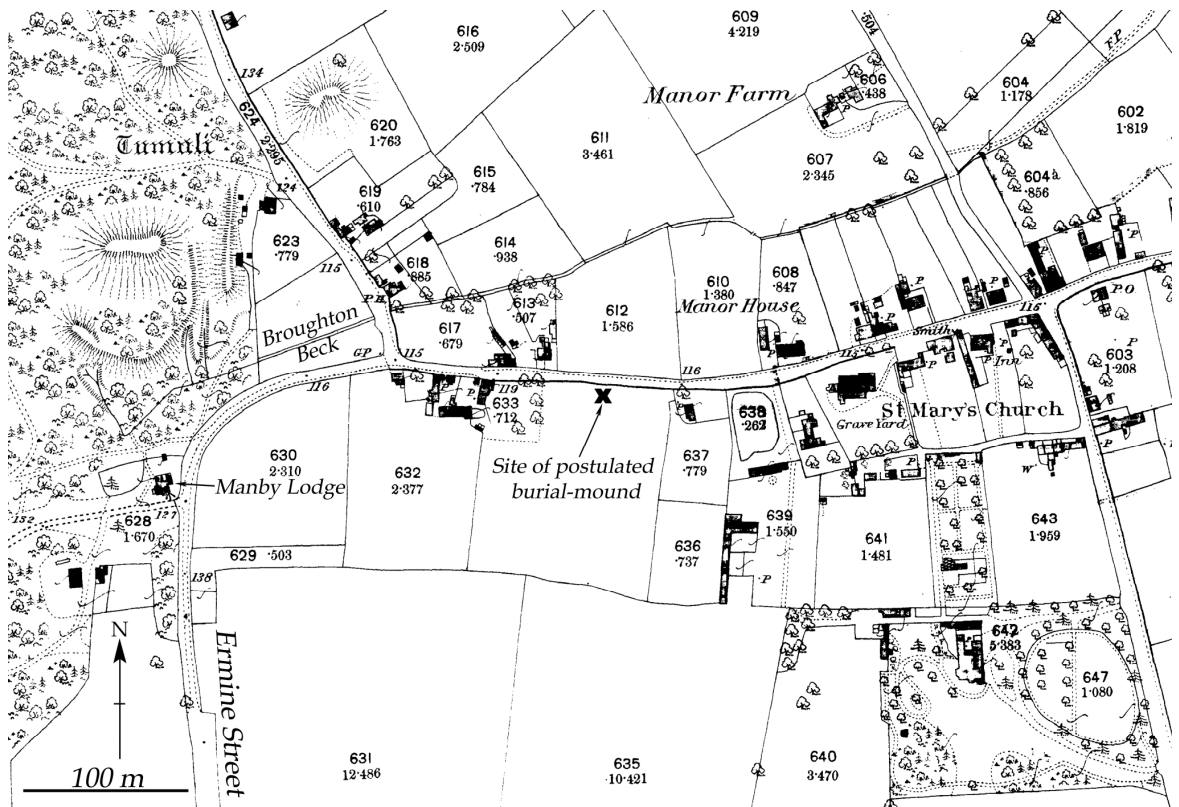


Fig. I.4.4 – First edition OS map of Broughton.

The rectilinear boundaries of both the present churchyard and the manorial curia appear artificial, as if both have been subdivided from a much larger unit. This may comprise of most of the settlement core, which tentatively forms a coherent sub-rectangular plot *c.* 160 m east/west by 140 m north/south, bisected by the present road. The road is unlikely to have been a significant thoroughfare in the early medieval period since it dwindles as it runs east, encountering no settlement, towards the River Ancholme, where there is no crossing. The early medieval crossing was at Brigg (OE ‘bridge’) 2.5 miles to the south. Brigg was known in the *Domesday Book* as *Glandforda* (‘ford where sports are played’): the element ‘Brigg’ is recorded from 1235 (Ekwall 1960, 197). Broughton’s original settlement may therefore have contained St Mary’s church and a manor-house, later subdivided into a regular settlement grid (fig. I.4.5).

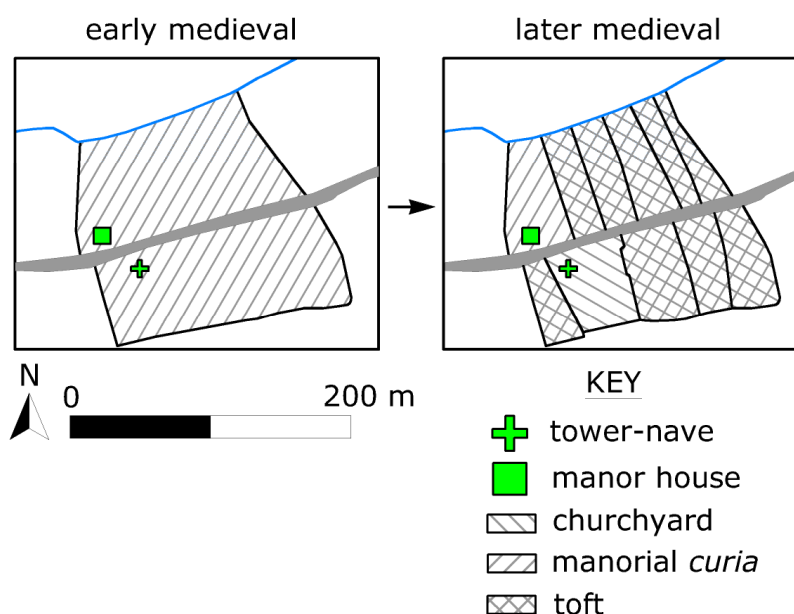


Fig. I.4.5 – Suggested development of Broughton's settlement plan

Manorial evidence

The *Domesday Book* supports the interpretation of Broughton as a manorial centre. There are three entries, one the minor record of three bovates¹ of land belonging to Edwin, the second of 7 bovates belonging to Grimkel (Williams and Martin 2002, 939, 944), and the third:

In Broughton, Maerle-Sveinn had 10 caracutes of land and 6 bovates to the geld. [There is] land for 12 ploughs. Ralph Paynell has 2 ploughs there, and 29 sokemen on 5 caracutes and 3 bovates of this land and 34 villans and 8 bordars with 13 ploughs. There is a church and a priest, and 1 mill [rendering] 2s, and 240 acres of meadow, and scrubland 2 leagues long and 1 broad. TRE worth £10; now £7; but in the past year it was worth £10.

(Williams and Martin 2002, 939).

Maerle-Sveinn was an important Anglo-Saxon nobleman, a significant landholder in several counties and Sheriff of Lincolnshire. He remained a thorn in King William's side following the Conquest, so his lands were confiscated in favour of Ralph Paynel, a wealthy Norman lord and Sherriff of Yorkshire (Sawyer 1998, 140, 203–5, 207–10).

¹ A 'bovate' is one-eighth of a caracute, which is the Anglo-Scandinavian term for a hide.

Broughton was Maerle-Sveinn's largest and most valuable manor in the county, suggesting that it was his estate-centre and residence.

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.4.6)

Communication routes

Broughton lies adjacent to Ermine Street, a major Anglo-Saxon route linking Lincoln with York. The tower-nave would have afforded a good view to the south and an excellent view over the River Ancholme, although the River Trent and the Humber Estuary would have been the key navigable routes in the early medieval period. They are not intervisible with the tower, which could have been constructed on higher ground within the parish had visibility been a key consideration.

Assembly-sites

The meeting-place of Broughton's wapentake of Manley is probably a short distance west of the tower, at the suggested site of a former burial-mound (fig. I.4.4) (Shapland 2008, 505). As Sheriff of Lincolnshire, Maerle-Sveinn would have been responsible for mustering the shire-levy: the location of this meeting-place on or adjacent to Ermine Street would have made it an ideal place. The prominent, but undated, sharpening marks on the tower-nave's chancel-arch may have been an aspect of the ritual landscape of military muster at the time of the tower's construction (fig. I.4.6) (discussed in Shapland 2008, 508-9).



Fig. I.4.6 –The suggested sharpening-marks on the jamb of the tower-nave chancel-arch at Broughton (also shown in fig. I.4.3).

The highly significant and localised nature of these marks indicates that they were not casual, and their location adjacent to the site of the tower-nave's altar suggests that they were formed prior to the construction of the Norman chancel. They are suggested as marks made by the ritual sharpening and blessing of weapons, symbolising the lord as sword-giver. This is most familiar from the 7th century royal whetstone from Sutton Hoo, and can be found on the iconography of churches and blessing on the points of certain Anglo-Saxon swords (Oakeshott 1991, 28-9). Broughton's sharpening-marks (fig. I.4.6) closely resemble those in an identical location at Barton-upon-Humber [3] (fig. I.3.5).

Beacon sites

A chain of beacons ran along the Humber nine miles northeast of Broughton. They are not visible from the tower-nave.

Fortifications

The *burh* place-names of Lincolnshire have been usefully studied by Cox (1994b). None relate to the tower-nave.

Estates

The *Domesday Book* holdings of Maerle-Sveinn in 1066 date to a little after the probable construction of the tower-nave, but they serve as a useful guide. They have relatively good intervisibility with the tower-nave; again, the parish contains areas of higher ground had visibility been the main purpose of this tower.

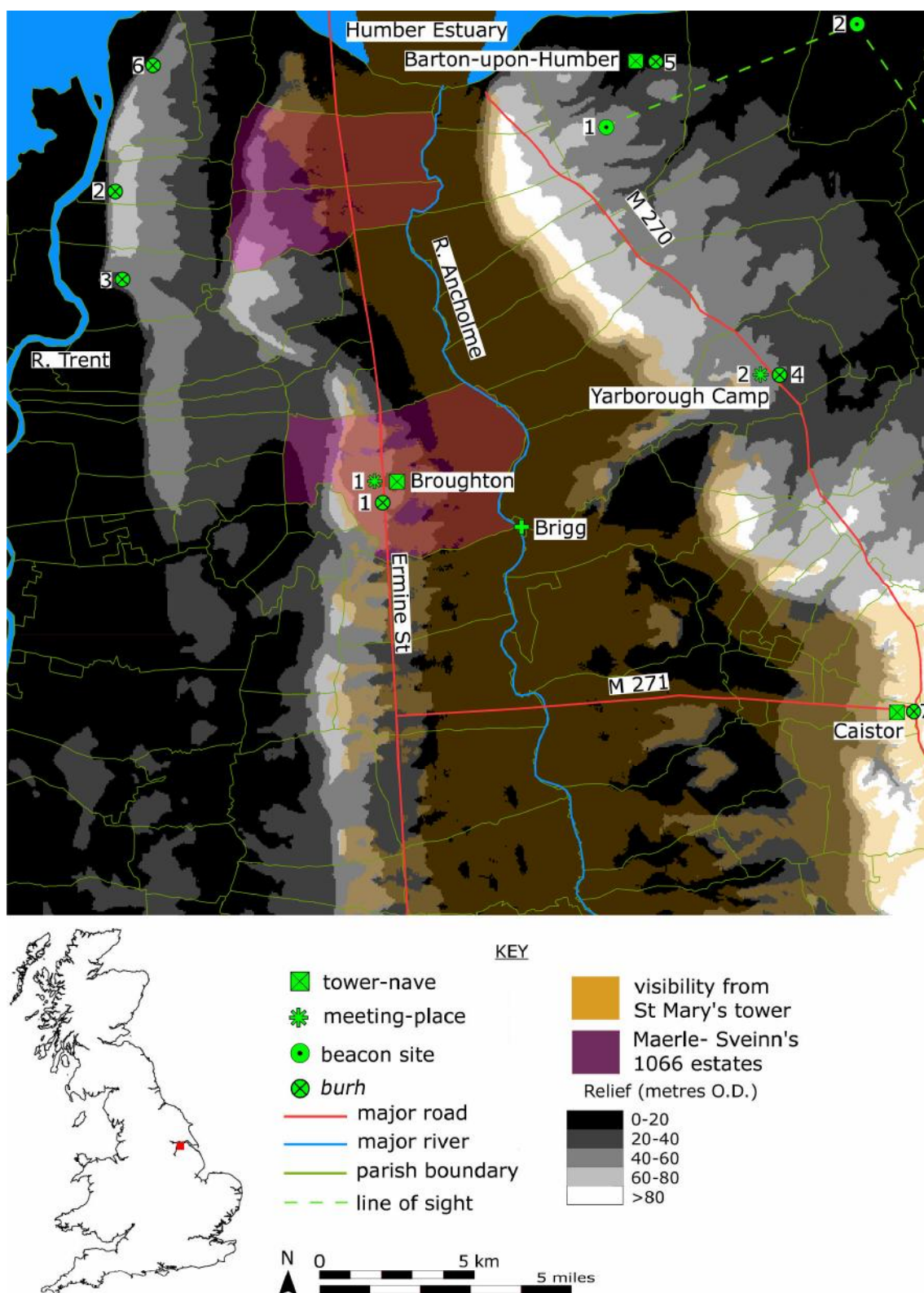


Fig. I.4.7 – The landscape context of Broughton.

Key to fig. I.4.7

Assembly-places

1. Manley Wapentake met near Manby in Broughton parish (Cameron 2001, 4), possibly at a suggested burial-mound between Broughton and Ermine Street (Shapland 2008, 505).
2. The meeting-place of Yarborough wapentake is at Yarborough Camp (Cameron 1991, 100).

Beacon sites

1. Beacon Hill (*Beacon Gate* 1658), Barton-upon-Humber (Cameron 1991, 33).
2. Totney Hill Farm (*Totney Close* 1648), Goxhill (Cameron 1991, 127).

Fortifications

1. Broughton (*Bertone* 1086) may have meant *burh-tūn* (Shapland 2008, 503).
2. Burton upon Stather (*Burtone* 1086) (Cameron 2001, 43).
3. Flixborough (Cameron 2001, 55).
4. Yarborough hillfort has an adjacent field-name *Burghil* (1240) (Cameron 1991, 100).
5. Goldburgh (*Goldburgh Wra* 1415), considered a *burh*-name by Cox (1994b, 42-5).
6. Alkborough (*Alchebarge* 1086) (Cameron 2001, 5-6).
7. Caistor [6] probably retained a Roman fort into the early medieval period (see appendix I.5).

Conclusion

St Mary's is a rectangular tower-nave with a stair-turret, of probable mid-11th century date, which may have been raised from a single-storey chapel. It stands adjacent to the later manor-house, and may have been incorporated into a formerly much larger manorial *curia*. This is supported by the settlement's possible *burh* place-name, and its status in 1066 as the chief place in the county of the powerful Sherrieff of Lincolnshire. The tower-nave lay adjacent to an assembly-place and a major long-distant route, along which it was prominent from the south, although its usefulness as a watchtower was limited by its lack of visibility to the Humber beacon-system. A nave was added to the tower in the early Norman period.

Appendix I.5: St Benedict's, Bury St Edmunds abbey, Suffolk

Introduction

The abbey of Bury St Edmunds was re-founded in the reign of Cnut (1016-1035) on the site of an earlier minster. The relics of the sainted King Edmund of East Anglia (855-869) were translation there in 1120. A number of churches were constructed at the abbey through the 11th century, including a tower-nave church and a royal burial rotunda. The abbey ruins have been cleared and planned (figs I.5.1 & I.5.2) (Whittingham 1951), and limited excavation undertaken, focussing on the abbey church (Gilyard-Beer 1969). The chief source for the Anglo-Saxon abbey is documentary, is been usefully summarised by Gem and Keen (1984).

Description

Abbey churches

1. The early minster (fig. I.5.1, no. 1)

The early minster church of St Mary lay on the site of the later abbey's north transept. It was already described as 'ancient' in the twelfth century. It was demolished with the construction of the later medieval abbey church between 1121 and 1148 (Gem and Keen 1984, 1-2; Gransden 2004, 629-30).

Between 924 and 939 the royal relics of St Edmund were moved to what later became known as Bury St Edmunds, and a new church was built to house them. According to Abbo of Fleury's late 10th century *Life* of the saint, it was 'a very large church, wonderfully constructed of wooden planks' (*construxit permaximam miro ligneo tabulatu aecclesiam*) (Winterbottom 1972, 82) served by a community of secular priests (Gem and Keen 1984, 1).

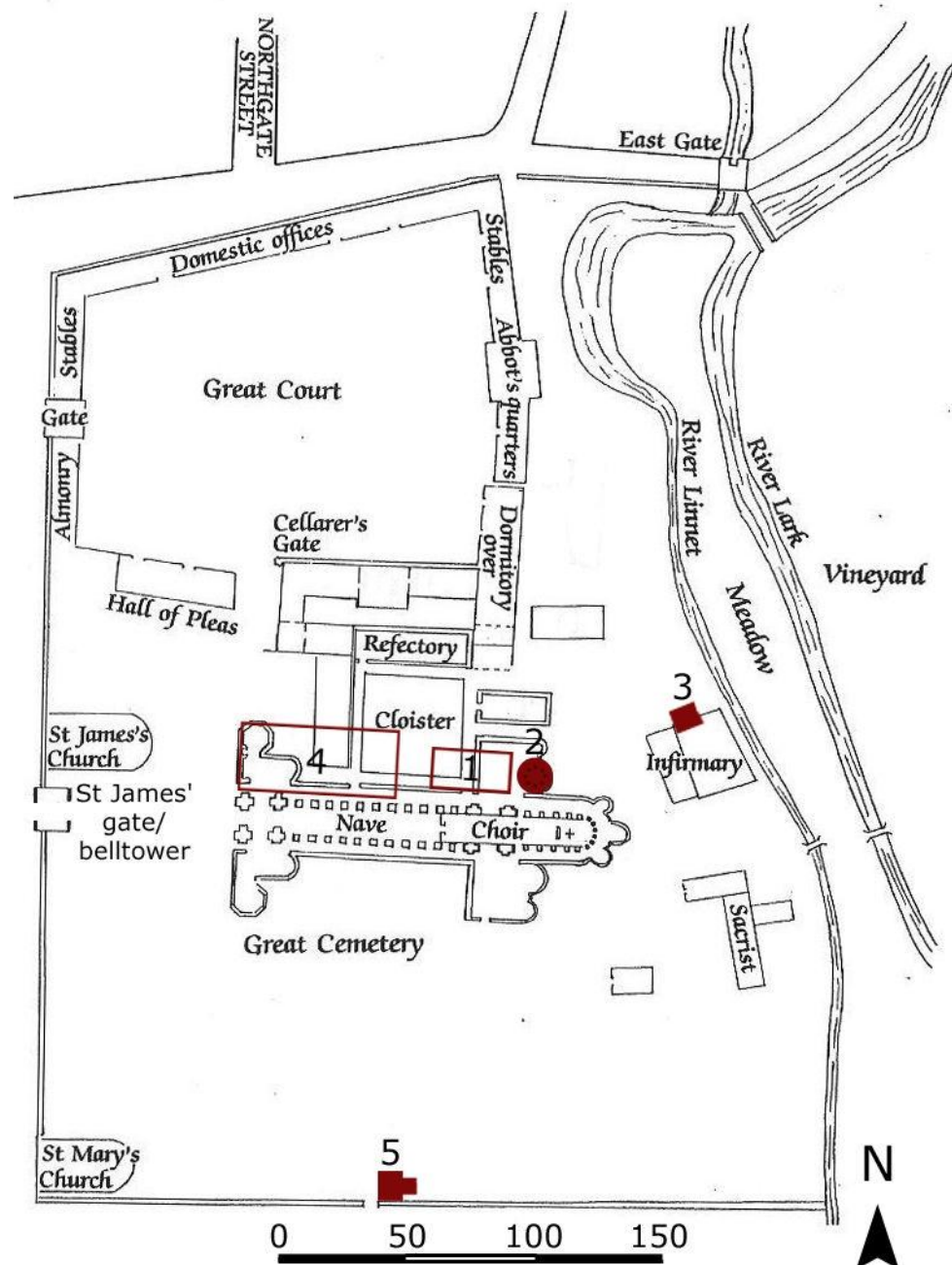
2. The rotunda of SS Mary and Edmund (fig. I.5.1, no. 2)

The timber church housing the relics of St Edmund was rebuilt in stone sometime between 1021-32 and dedicated to SS Mary and St Edmund. It was described in a later medieval source as:

The round chapel... in which the body of St Edmund rested before his translation [into the Norman church]... in his bier, in which the said martyr was formerly carried about.

Rotunde capella... in quo corpus sancti Edmundi requieuit ante translacionem suam... in sua bera in qua dictus martir quondam portabatur.

(James 1895, 188; trans. Gem 1975a, 36).



The abbey buildings before c. 1095

- 1 - Church of St Mary
- 2 - Rotunda of St Edmund and St Mary
- 3 - St Benedict's tower/tower of Wihtgar
- 4 - Basilica of St Denis
- 5 - St Margaret's tower/tower of Aldbold

Fig. I.5.1 – Plan of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds at the end of the 12th century (Whittingham 1971).

From other sources, it is clear this church consisted of a central rotunda surrounded by an ambulatory (summarised in Gem and Keen 1984, 1). The ambulatory was probably removed with the rebuilding of the abbey church in the early 12th century: the rotunda

survived until 1275 when it was demolished to make way for the new Lady chapel. This is related in the 13th century *Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds*:

There under the ground were found the walls of a certain old round church, which indeed was a great deal wider than the chapel, and was so constructed that the altar of the chapel was as it were in the middle of it; and we believe it to have been that which was constructed at the beginning for the cult of St Edmund.

Ubi sub terra inuenti fuerunt muri cuiusdam ueteris ecclesie rotunde, que quidem multo latior fuit quam capella et ita constructa quod altare capelle quasi in medio eius fuerat; et credimus illam fuisse que ad opus sancti Eadmundi primo fuit constructa.

(Gransden 1964, 58; trans. Gem 1975a, 36-7).

Richard Gem (1975a, 37) suggests that the form of this church bore reference to the royal burial-chapel at Aachen, befitting the burial-place of an Anglo-Saxon king. Cnut may have intended it as his as his royal mausoleum. The rotunda form may also have borne reference to the octagonal church outside Jerusalem believed to have contained the tomb of Mary (section 5.6.1), making its form doubly appropriate (Gransden 2004, 638).

The relics of St Edmund were moved again in 1095 to the new abbey church. The rotunda itself, which survived until at least 1275; Richard Gem (quoted in Gransden 2004, 640) suggests that it was incorporated into the Norman abbey church as a powerful statement of continuity with the Anglo-Saxon past.

3. *The tower-nave of St Benedict* (fig. I.5.1, no. 3)

The church of St Benedict was probably constructed shortly before 1044 under the abbacy of Ufi (1020-44). It comprised a 'great tower' (*magnum turris*) and a porticus; internally it had at least two bays, running east/west, divided by piers (*columnpnae*) (James 1895, 180-81; Gem and Keen 1984, 2). It stood adjacent to Abbot Ufi's residence, on the later site of the abbey infirmary, c. 30 m northeast of the rotunda containing the relics of St Edmund. This tower appears to be referred to in the foundation charter of the religious house at Clare (Suffolk), dated 1044x1065:

The famous Earl Ælfric, son of Wihtgar, gave to Bury St Edmunds *Meleford* (Long Melford) and built there the church of St John the Baptist at *Claram* (Clare), and instituted clerks there; and he gave the manor of this church to Bury St Edmunds, and he gave half the church to Abbot Leofstan

(of Bury), and his son Wihtgar dwelt in a certain tower where the hospital now is, and confirmed the gift of Meleford for the use of the sick.

(Hart 1966, 71).

Although the wording of the charter makes it unclear whether Wihtgar's tower was in Clare or Bury St Edmunds, the fact that the latter is known to have had a tower of this date on the later site of its infirmary must weigh heavily in its favour. Clare, on the other hand, was merely a chapel with seven canons which later became a monastic cell. No hospital is recorded there (Page 1975, 154-5).

Earl Ælfric was certainly in a position to have his son installed in such an elevated situation at Bury. He was an important regional landowner (Whitelock 1930, 188), and prior to 1043 he was one of two reeves responsible for managing the abbey's considerable estates (Davis 1909, 418-9). He is identified as the 'Aelfric *miles*' who witnessed a charter of Cnut (S 1390), adding a military dimension to his evident power (Davis 1909, 419). His son Wihtgar, who dwelt in St Benedict's tower, was an important landowner in his own right (Whitelock 1930, 188).

Assuming that St Benedict's chapel and Wihtgar's tower were the same building, its high-status associations continued into the 12th century. It was the burial-chapel of Abbot Ufi and three of his 12th century successors. It gained an eastern porticus c. 1123-36 which was dedicated to St Michael, appropriately the saint of high places, commonly towers (Whittingham 1951, 181; Stocker and Everson 2006, 82). Whilst the tower's *porticus* survived until at least 1425, there is debate as to when the tower itself was rebuilt. It may have been demolished between 1182 and 1211, when the abbey infirmary was constructed (Gem and Keen 1984, 2), or it may have survived as the infirmary chapel (Whittingham 1951, 181).

Whittingham (1951, 181) suggests that fragmentary remains of the tower survive on the site of the abbey infirmary (figs I.5.2 & I.5.3).



Fig. I.5.2 – Detail of the infirmary and St Benedict's tower. The suggested remains of St Benedict's are marked in red (Whittingham 1951, plate XXI).



Fig. I.5.3 – The suggested fragmentary remains of St Benedict's, viewed from the west (top) and the east (bottom).

The awkward shape of the upstanding masonry makes it unsuitable for traditional plan or elevation drawing. A computer model has been prepared by Susie Green (2012, 38-46), enabling a useful series of cross-sections (fig. I.5.4).

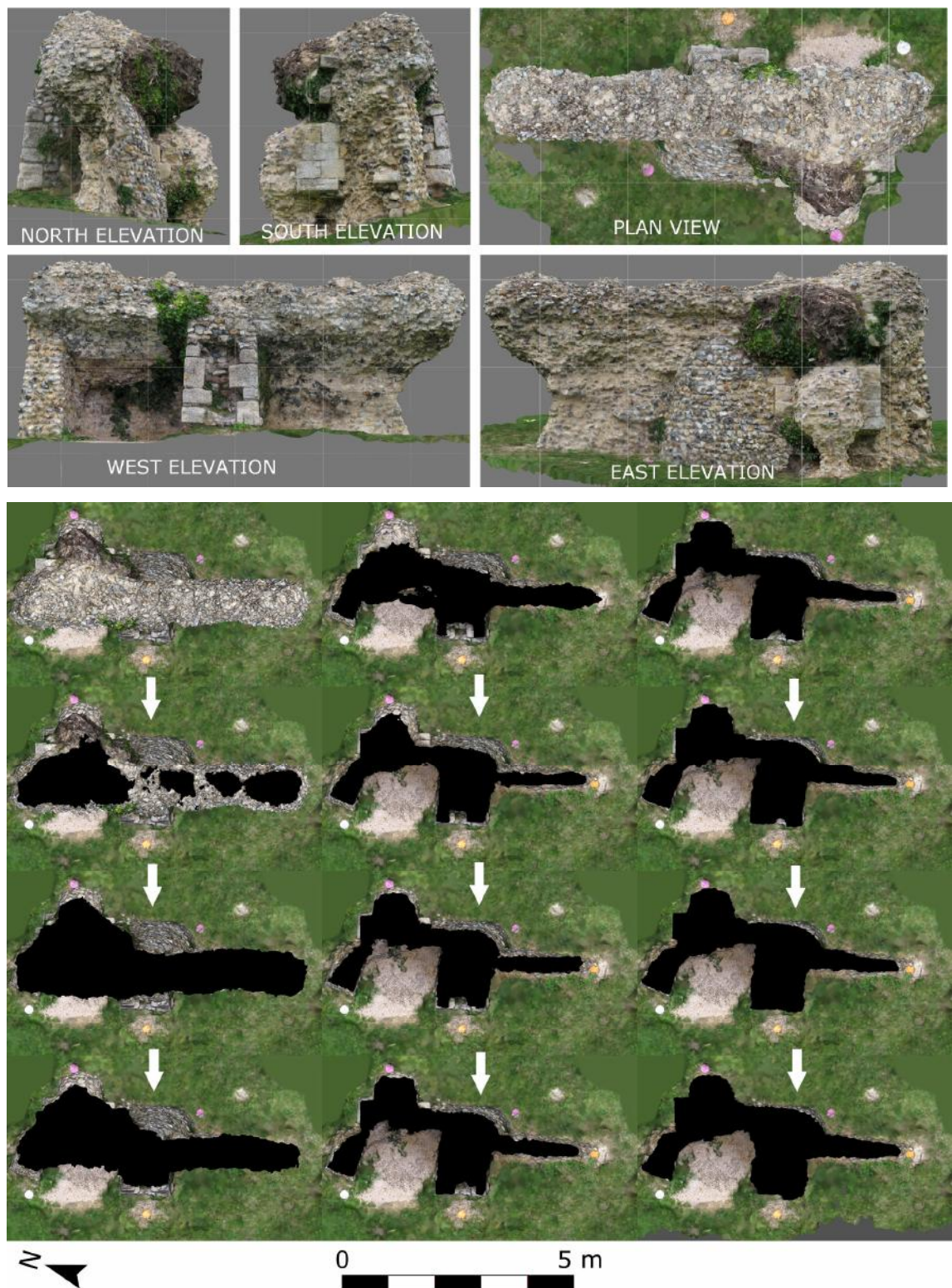


Fig. I.5.4 – Top: Computer models of the suggested fragmentary remains of St Benedict's. **Bottom:** Cross-sections of the remains (modified from Green 2012).

Whittingham's description of the remains of St Benedict's is worth repeating:

On one of the two lumps representing the infirmary chapel of St Michael [*i.e.* the tower porticus of 1123-36]... a Norman external string-course below former north windows abuts an earlier wall. From the latter instead of a Norman cross-vault springs a barrel vault running, astonishingly, north/south across an aisled nave.... Here we evidently have the Saxon Basilica of St Benedict whose dedication is commemorated in the calendar of the Vatican Psalter of *c.* 1050. It must have been a centrally-planned building with an 8 ft [2.45 m] barrel-vaulted aisle 12 ft [3.65 m] high surrounding a clerestoried nave measuring 14 by 20 ft [4.25 by 6.10 m]. The floor appears to be about 6 ft [1.8 m] below Trayle[?]. The west wall is door-less, so entrance must have been gained from the south.

(Whittingham 1951, 181).

Both the ground-plan described by Whittingham and the second 'lump' of masonry he mentions are no longer visible. His mention of absent features on the existing fragment, such as a Norman string-course and window-openings, implies either that the masonry has deteriorated significantly over past decades, or the ground level has risen by the 1.8 m Whittingham indicates. It is therefore difficult to reconcile the existing fragment with Whittingham's description, particularly since the dimensions in his description do not match up to those on his plan (fig. I.5.2). Those from the plan have been followed here (fig. I.5.5).

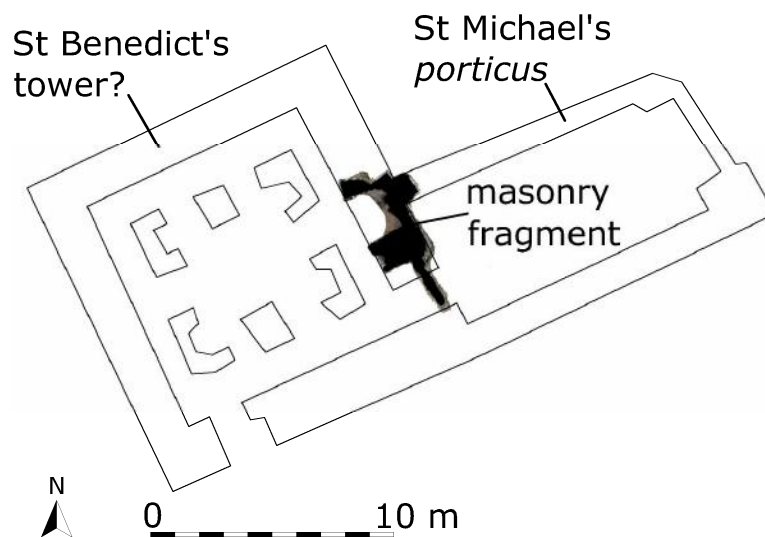


Fig. I.5.5 – An attempt to reconcile Green's cross-section of the existing fragment of St Benedict's (fig. I.5.4) with Whittingham's reconstructed plan (fig. I.5.2).

Whittingham's 'earlier wall' is presumably the main body of the masonry as it presently exists, abutted by a stub of the *porticus* chapel of St Michael. The cavity in the centre of the west elevation of the masonry fragment may represent either a window, blocked

when St Michael's chapel was constructed, or an altar-niche, given its location in the centre of the building's east wall. Part of the round head of the doorway between St Benedict's and St Michael's may survive in the wall adjacent (fig. I.5.6).



Fig. I.5.6 – Interpretation of the west elevation of the surviving fragment of St Benedict's (Green 2012, 38; see fig. I.5.5).

To conclude, the tower-nave of St Benedict was apparently constructed by Earl Ælfric *c.* 1044, and seems to partially survive above ground. Its plan may have been recovered by Whittingham (1951, plate XXI). The 'Norman' work mentioned in his description may be late Anglo-Saxon, or date from the documented 12th century additions to the tower. Its vaulted foundations, described by Whittingham, are present at the substantial tower-nave at St Augustine's, Canterbury [7]. The completed tower of St Benedict would have been comparable in scale to St George's, Oxford [21], and would have made a worthy dwelling for the son of an earl. This grandeur may be why it was chosen soon after as the mortuary-chapel of the abbots of Bury St Edmunds, within the subsequent *porticus* chapel of St Michael.

4. *The basilica of St Denis* (fig. I.5.1, no. 4)

Abbot Baldwin (1065-1097/8), a monk from St Denis in France, built early in his abbacy in a large basilica to St Denis to house the growing monastic community. It seems to have stood on the north side of the west entrance of the later medieval abbey church, and survived until *c.* 1121-1148 (Gem and Keen 1984, 2).

5. *The chapel of St Margaret* (fig. I.5.1, no. 5)

The construction of a chapel of St Margaret can also probably be ascribed to the abbacy of Baldwin. It was built by a priest, Aldbold, and was described as a 'by no means small tower and a chapel adjoining it' (*turris non parva et adhaerens ei capella*) (Gransden

1973, 117) This was taken by Gem and Keen (1984, 2) to denote a tower-nave church, but the word 'adjoining' (*adhaerens*) implies that the main body of this church was functionally distinct from the tower. It cannot therefore be included in this study. Its location is suggested by the construction of a new chapel of St Margaret at the south gate of the abbey cemetery in 1121-48, at which time the old chapel was demolished (Gem and Keen 1984, 2).

Discussion

The towers in context

The abbey before Cnut

Bury St Edmunds was the site of a minster church, reputedly founded *c.* 630 by King Sigeberht of East Anglia. It is referred to in the 12th century *Liber Eliensis*, in a passage based on Bede's 8th century *Ecclesiastical History*, as *Bedericsesworth* (Gransden 2004, 629). Excavated Ipswich Ware indicates 7th to 9th century activity on the site (Statham 1998, 98-9). *Bedericsesworth* appears to have been a royal *vill* at this date: it is referred to as such by Abbo of Fleury in the late 10th century (Statham 1998, 98). This is supported by the place-name *Beadurīcsword* (945; Ekwall 1960, 78): *word* can mean 'hall', and has associations with nobility and value, as in the modern 'worth' (Hall 1894, 345). The minster gained wider ecclesiastical importance following the translation there of the body of the sainted king Edmund of East Anglia (*d.* 870) during the reign of king Æthelstan (924-39) (S 507; Lobel 1935, 3).

The 11th century abbey

Bury St Edmunds was favoured by both Cnut and his successor Harold Harefoot, allowing it to rise to a position of great wealth and importance. This culminated in Edward the Confessor's decision to grant to the abbey unprecedented autonomy over the western half of Suffolk in a charter of 1042x1065 (S 1046). Edward had granted other estates with extensive legal powers to ecclesiastical hands, the greatest of which was the bishop of Worcester's triple-hundred of Oswaldslow, but the eight and a half hundreds granted to Bury St Edmunds were exceptional (surveyed in Stenton 1947, 492). The administrative centre of the estate was the assembly site at Thingoe (see below), adjacent to Bury, implying that the abbey and its settlement acted as the power-centre of what was 'clearly a miniature shire' (Davis 1909, 419). Jurisdiction over this vast estate had belonged to Queen Emma until her disgrace in 1043, possibly as a gift from her husband Cnut. This may in turn help date this granting of the Abbey's autonomy to 1043 or soon after. The charter ceded to the abbey considerable

jurisdiction, including over *infangentheof* and the king's rights of *heregild* and *shipgild* taxation (Davis 1909, 418-20). This further implies that the abbey had responsibility for defensive matters, and required an appropriate tax-base to support this. Further exemption from *heregild* was granted in 1053-7 (S 1084).

In 1065 the king granted the abbey the right of minting its own coinage, an extraordinary transfer of economic power (S 1085; Davis 1909, 420; Gransden 2007, 238). The best parallel is the Archbishop of York's issue at St Peter's mint c. 905-919 and 921-927, both periods of weak secular control over that city (Blackburn 2004, 332-3). The Bury St Edmunds mint was active in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and remained successful into the 14th century (Eaglen 1998). Following Edward's death, the abbey's half-shire was important enough to require confirmation from every successive sovereign; this was granted, as a matter of course, up the reign of Stephen (Davis 1909, 421). The abbey's considerable regional power was no transient anomaly, but an established feature of the Suffolk landscape that survived the Norman Conquest intact. From the mid-11th century, the abbey 'must be seen not only as a religious foundation but as a political, financial, judicial and legal entity with a distinct and idiosyncratic local identity and a specific territory' (Bale 2009, 8). The abbey's power within its territory is indicated by the absence within it of any significant estates belonging to the king or the most important secular lords of East Anglia (fig. I.5.7) (Senecal 1999).

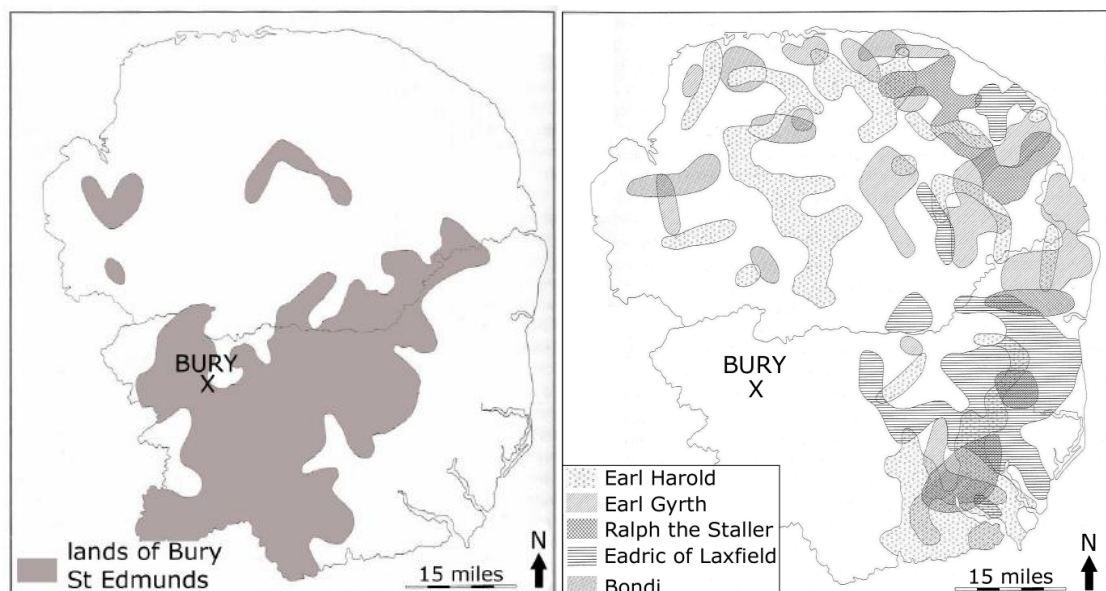


Fig. I.5.7 – The *Domesday Book* holdings of Bury St Edmunds Abbey compared to the five wealthiest lords in East Anglia (modified from Senecal 1999, 98-9).

The fortifications

Bury St Edmunds stands in a naturally defensible location, on a low chalk hill with the Lark and its water meadows to the east, the Linnet to the south and the Tayfen valley to the north (Carr 1975, 46). These natural boundaries were probably fortified by the mid-11th century (Lobel 1935, 3-4), long before the construction of the abbey precinct and town walls in 1121-46 (Gauthiez 1998, 93). The settlement was referred to as a 'Byrig' (*burh*) from the 1030s, prefiguring its later name 'Bury' (Ekwall 1960, 78). Writing in the early 12th century, William of Malmesbury refers to King Cnut building a ditch (*fossa*) around the abbey (*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* ii.74.28; Winterbottom 2007, 246-7) in the aftermath of King Swein's attacks on the area. It has been suggested that the curvilinear Maynewater Lane (fig. I.5.8) preserves the layout of this fortification (Carr 1975; Warner 1996, 173). Finally, a fragmentary later 11th century survey of the abbey's estates mentions a gift of 16 hides, 6 inside the *burh* and 10 outside (Douglas 1928, 382; Lobel 1935, 6-7).

There was a second enclosure around Bury, known as the *Banleuca*. This was a circuit approximately two miles in diameter, centred on the abbey, defining its inner territory (fig. I.5.9). Excavations have shown it was marked by an earth bank but no ditch, making it distinct from Cnut's *fossa* (Wilson and Hurst 1969, 267). Its territory is supposed to have been granted to the abbey by King Edmund in 945 (S 507; Lobel 1935, 5): although this charter is spurious in its present form, its boundary-clause is convincingly pre-Conquest (Hart 1992, 59). Whilst the *Banleuca* is unlikely to have been a defensible feature, it gives further context for the apparent desire by the pre-Conquest abbey to firmly demarcate its space: according to a spurious charter of Edward the Confessor, each of its four entrances was marked by a cross (S 1045).

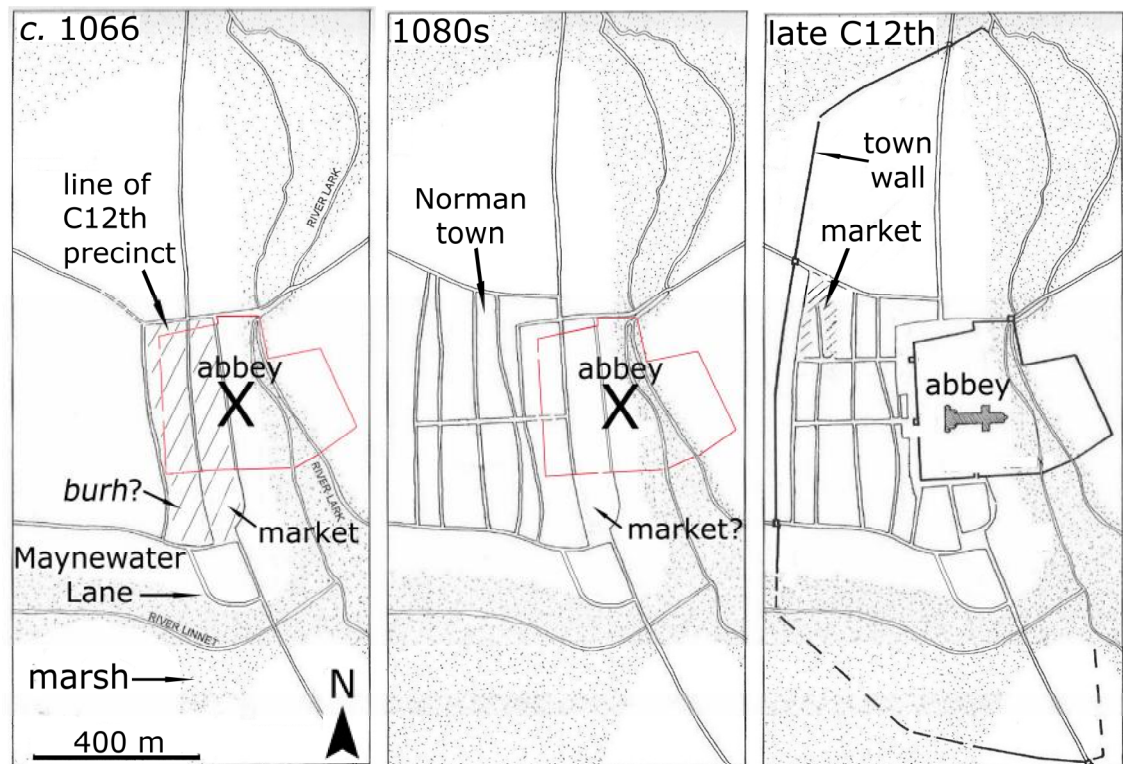


Fig. I.5.8 – The development of Bury St Edmunds (modified from Gauthiez 1998 95).

The tower in the landscape (fig. I.5.9)

Communication routes

Bury lies in a valley at the junction between the Lark and Linnet rivers, with high ground to the east and west. To the north and the west lay the thinly-populated Brecklands and fens; most of the area's population was concentrated in land to the south and east (Carr 1975, 46). Two important long-distance routes ran through the area: the Icknield Way from Cambridgeshire to the Wash lies six miles to the northwest, and the main Roman road network from London into East Anglia, centred on Margary 33a, lay four miles to the east. Bury communicated with these routes via several later roads, which would also have continued to the early medieval trading centre at Ipswich and the East Anglian royal vill at Thetford, a bishopric between 1075 and 1094. The river Lark was also navigable as far as Bury St Edmunds, and was used in the later middle ages for the transportation of building materials for the abbey (Blair 2006). Despite these important routes, the tower-nave would not have a useful watchtower, and would not have been prominent for travellers.

Assembly-sites

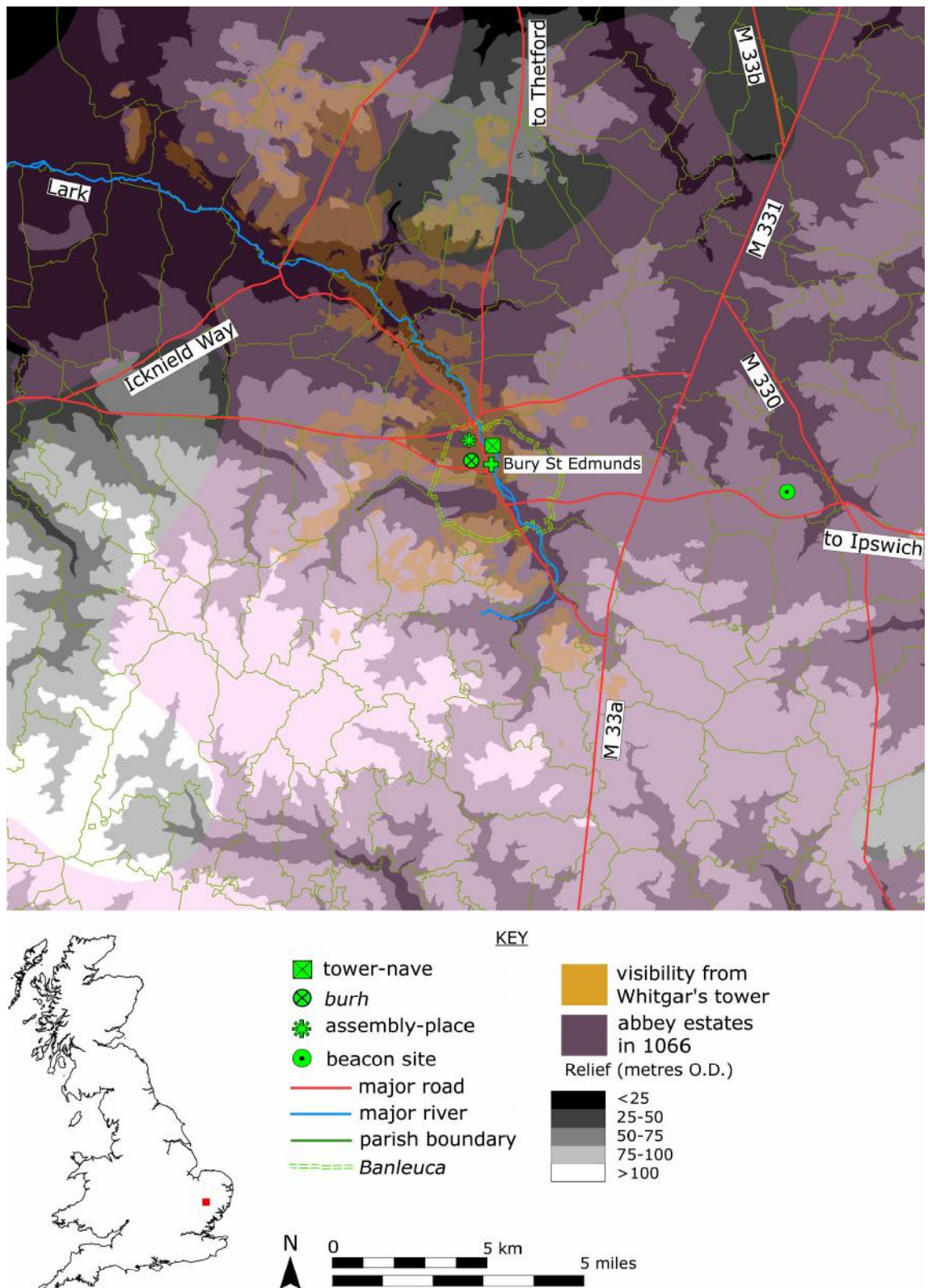
Within the *Banleuca* lay the *Thingoe*, the assembly-site for all West Suffolk. Its location was marked by a group of four mounds, no longer extant, to the northwest of the town (Warner 1996, 150). The tower-nave would have been clearly visible from this place.

Beacon sites

The tower-nave had no view of the one beacon-site in the locality. However, study of Suffolk's beacons is hampered by its present lack of coverage by the *English Place-Names Society*.

Estates

The tower-nave was not prominent in the local landscape, and there is little sense that it was placed with anything other than the pre-existing location of the abbey in mind.



Assembly-sites

1. The *Thingoe* was the assembly-site for all West Suffolk (Warner 1996, 150).

Beacon sites

1. 'Tostock' (*Totestoc* in 1086) (Ekwall 1960, 478).

Conclusion

Bury St Edmunds rose to great importance in 11th century England, and held a remarkable degree of devolved economic and judicial power over half of Suffolk. It was the burial-place of a king, a defended *burh*, and lay adjacent to the assembly-site of its half-shire. Its territory was administered by two reeves, one of whom – Earl Ælfric – built a tower-nave within the abbey precinct, probably in the early 1040s. Remarkably, there is documentary evidence to suggest that his son used the tower as a residence. A fragment of this tower may survive, and it appears to have been an enormous structure. It gained a *porticus* chapel in the late 11th century, and became the mortuary-chapel of the abbots of Bury St Edmunds. One other member of the abbey's military aristocracy is known to have constructed a substantial lordly tower in Bury St Edmunds [B], in the late 11th century (see appendix II.B). These towers would not have been prominent in the landscape or strategically useful: they can be interpreted as material expressions of lordship at a true centre of power in the late Anglo-Saxon landscape.

Appendix I.6: SS Peter and Paul, Caistor, Lincolnshire

Caistor is, perhaps, more deserving of study than any other early building in the county.

(Stocker and Everson 2006, 6).

Introduction

The church of St Peter and St Paul, Caistor (fig. I.6.1) stands within a Roman enclosure high up on the western slopes of the Lincolnshire Wolds, overlooking Ermine Street. It was briefly described by A. H. Thomson (1907-8, 62-3), Fisher (1962, 269-71) and the Taylors (1965, 127-9), and a guidebook written (Binnall 1932). It receives extended treatment in the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone sculpture* (Everson and Stocker 1999, 121-5) and a limited excavation has taken place in the tower in 1996 (Field and North 1996), but it has not otherwise been recorded.



Fig. I.6.1 – General view of the church, from the south.

Description

The plan of the church (fig. I.6.2)

The present church consists of a western tower, a nave with north and south aisles and a chancel. It is entered through a north porch, with a corresponding doorway in the wall of the south aisle. The tower measures 7.2 m north/south by 7.35 m east/west externally. It is separated from the nave by a tower-arch cut through a wall 1.8 m thick, the thickest

of any Anglo-Saxon church (Fisher 1969, 88; Taylor 1978, 959). It has therefore been suggested that the nave was built up against an existing tower (Leahy 2007, 205). At ground level, the north wall is 1.05 m thick, the south wall 1.00 m thick, and the west wall up to 1.15 m thick. Within the tower-arch is a flight of three steps which ascend the height difference of 0.53 m from the nave to the tower-space; the rest of the church is all on the same lower level as the nave.

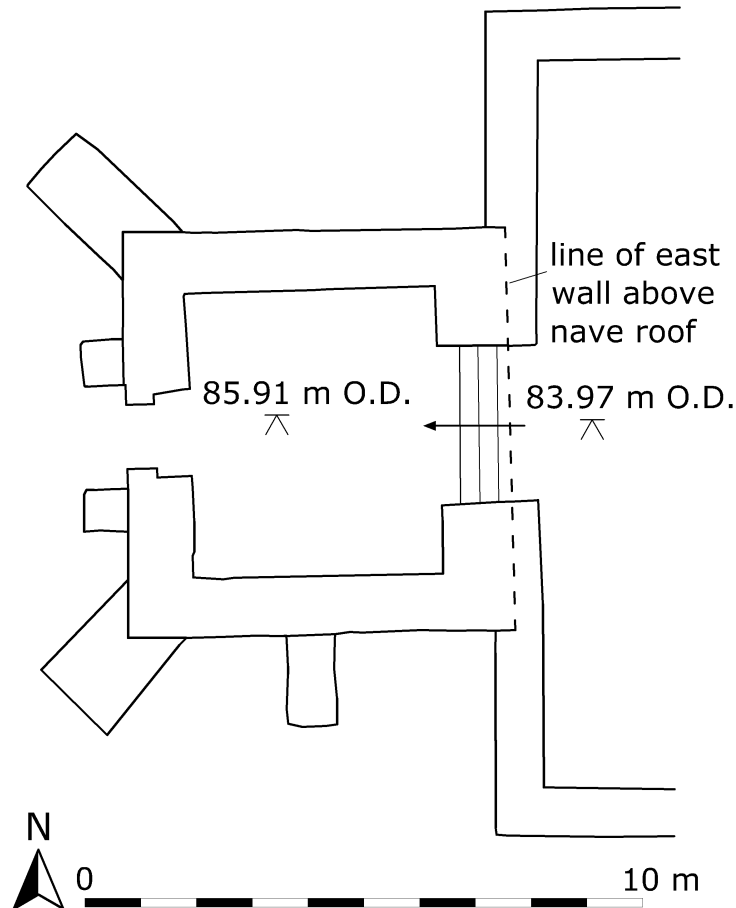


Fig. I.6.2 – Plan of the tower

The exterior elevations of the tower

The tower is of coursed and roughly-dressed ironstone rubble construction, divided into four unequal stages by string-courses. The fourth, topmost, stage is later than the lower three and is constructed from ashlar of limestone and ironstone. It is topped by battlements, gargoyles and corner-pinnacles. On each of the four elevations is a two-light traceried belfry-opening of probable fourteenth-century date. The dressed string-course separating this stage from the rest of the tower is contemporary with it, suggesting that the early fabric of the tower does not survive to its full original height. The upper two or three courses of stone on the third stage of each elevation are larger and more regular than those below, indicating that they were rebuilt to level off the

older masonry in preparation for the addition of this later belfry. The tower is supported by five buttresses, rebuilt 1888 (Saunders 2003, 16).

North elevation (figs I.6.3 & I.6.4).



Fig. I.6.3 – The external north elevation of the tower

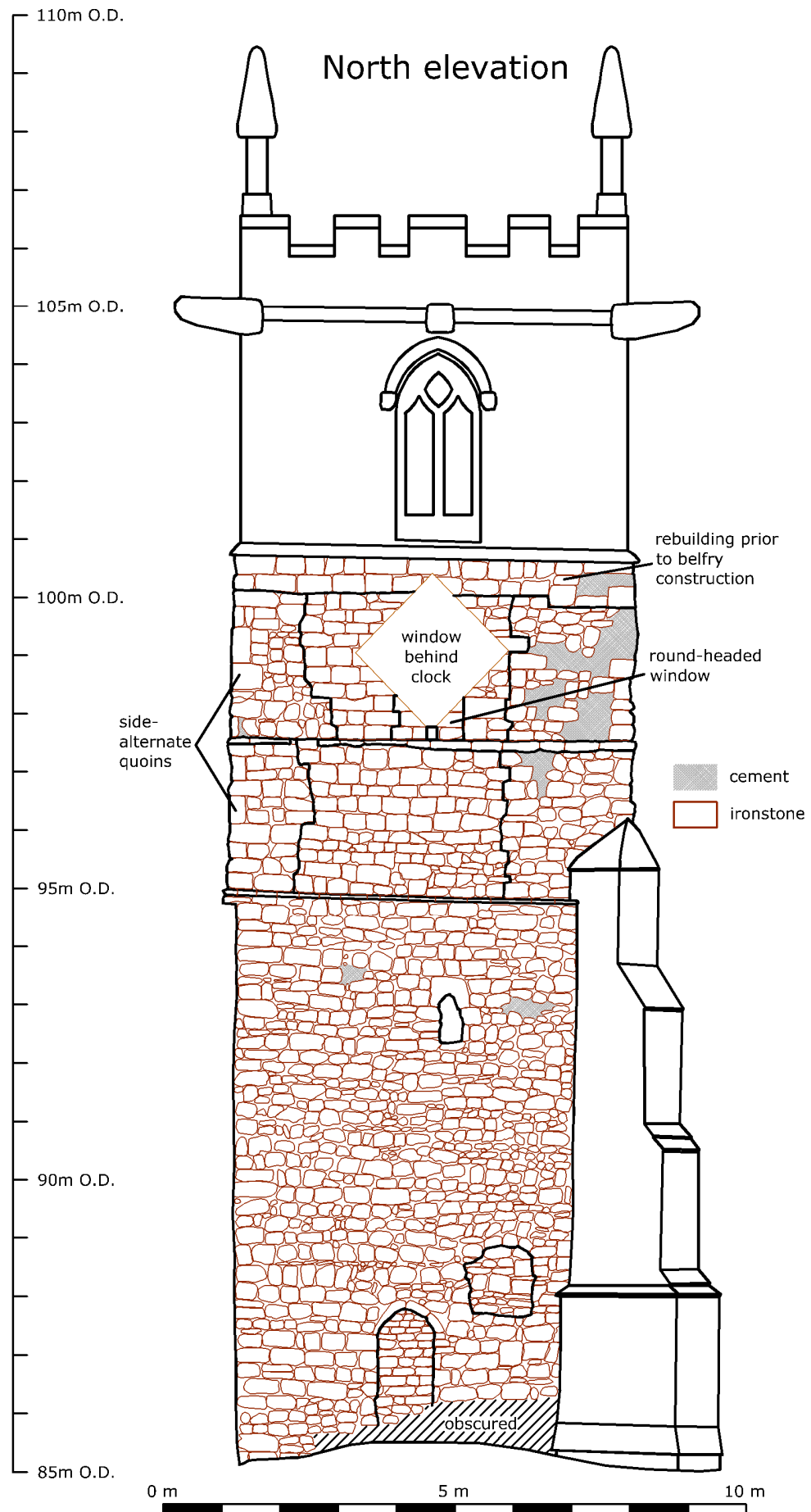


Fig. I.6.4 – Drawing of the external north elevation of the tower

The first stage of the north elevation is the tallest, at 9.80 m from the present ground level to the string-course separating it from the tower's second stage. It is partially obscured to the east by the later diagonal buttress. Excavation has revealed a two-stage chamfered plinth at the base of the elevation, 0.50 m below present ground level (Field and North 1996, 2). A round-headed doorway, now blocked, is visible in the centre of the elevation, approximately 0.95 m wide by 2.40 m tall. Its head is simply formed of megalithic curved voussoirs which meet at the apex to give the head a faintly pointed segmental appearance. This is seemingly unique in Anglo-Saxon building practice, paralleled only by the use of gabled megaliths to form the triangular-headed doorways of the type described by Taylor (1978, 807-9). The fact that the wall's plinth runs uninterrupted beneath the tower (Field and North 1996, 2) may however suggest that it is a later insertion, although this is not clear in the fabric of the elevation. This is supported by the doorway's location, off-set from the centre of the elevation. Two other openings are visible in this lower stage. The first is a window, a short distance to the west of the doorway, now also blocked. Its sill is approximately 2.50 m from ground level; it is up to 1.20 m tall and 1.05 m wide with a rubble-built segmental head. Its large size suggests that it was a double-splayed opening. Above, at a height of 7.25 m, is a small single-splayed window with an eroded megalithic round head. It measures up to 0.80m tall and 0.40 wide, and has a rubble sill and jambs. Its internal splay is 13th century in appearance.

The second stage bears no sign of any openings. Its quoins are, uniquely for the tower, of well-dressed ironstone and are laid in a haphazard side-alternate fashion. The width of the north face of the tower is 6.95 m at this level. The central 3.25 m is more regularly-coursed with generally better-squared stones than the surrounding fabric. It is flanked by vertical breaks of construction, and may represent a later phase of construction associated with the insertion of a window in the wall above.

This break in construction is carried up to the third stage of the elevation. The fabric is partially obscured at this level by cement render. The masonry on each side of the vertical breaks of construction, where visible, is the same as that of the second stage, except that the quoins become irregular and lose their side-alternate pattern. One interpretation of this is that the northeast and northwest corners of the tower were rebuilt: this was certainly required in more modern times at the tower's southeast corner. However, no vertical breaks of construction are visible at this level on the tower's east or west faces, implying that the central part of the fabric has indeed been rebuilt.

The probable context for this rebuilding is the insertion of the window concealed behind the iron clock-face which dominates the centre of the elevation, dated 1853. In view of the tower's known structural weaknesses, this may have necessitated substantial rebuilding of the elevation. This concealed window is 13.15 m above ground level, with a round headed and no internal splay. It had already been blocked before the clock-face was inserted in 1853 (fig. I.6.5).



Fig. I.6.5 – Caistor church c. 1845, viewed from the north (Binnall 1932, 4).

East elevation (figs I.6.6-I.6.8).

The fabric of the lower part of the east elevation, below the level of the present nave roof, is obscured by plaster (fig. I.6.6). The only visible feature is the tower-arch which is 2.80 m wide and up to 4.60 m tall. It is offset from the centre of the east wall of the tower by 20 cm, but by only 5 cm from the centre of the west wall of the nave, implying that it was a later insertion positioned with the symmetry of the nave rather than the tower-space in mind. It is of a single order with a round head which springs from a chamfered sandstone impost that continues along the reveal of the opening. Above the arch is a chevron moulding in slight relief from the plaster of the surrounding wall, giving the arch a Norman appearance. A short distance below the apex of the present nave, at a level of 11.00 m above the floor of the nave, the wall can be seen to step back by approximately 0.5 m, which provides further evidence that the west wall of the nave abuts the east wall of the tower.



Fig. I.6.6 – The east elevation of the tower from the present nave



Fig. I.6.7 – The external east elevation of the tower above the present nave roof

Above the present nave roof (fig. I.6.7) the fabric of the elevation has been heavily repointed with cement, making its interpretation difficult. Additionally, the southern end of the elevation was rebuilt in 1889 due to a collapse of the tower's southeast corner (Saunders 2003, 16). The lower stage of the elevation, beneath a fragmentary string-course, extends from 10.10 m to 13.15 m above ground level. There are haphazard quoins on its north side. In the centre of the stage a blocked opening is visible, 0.50 m wide and at least 0.95 m tall. It is narrower than the narrowest known Anglo-Saxon doorway width of 0.61m at Ledsham (Yorkshire). It has a flat head with a megalithic lintel, and it appears to be original to the elevation. It corresponds with an opening visible low down inside the third floor of the tower (fig. I.6.17). It was blocked by 1845 (fig. I.6.5).

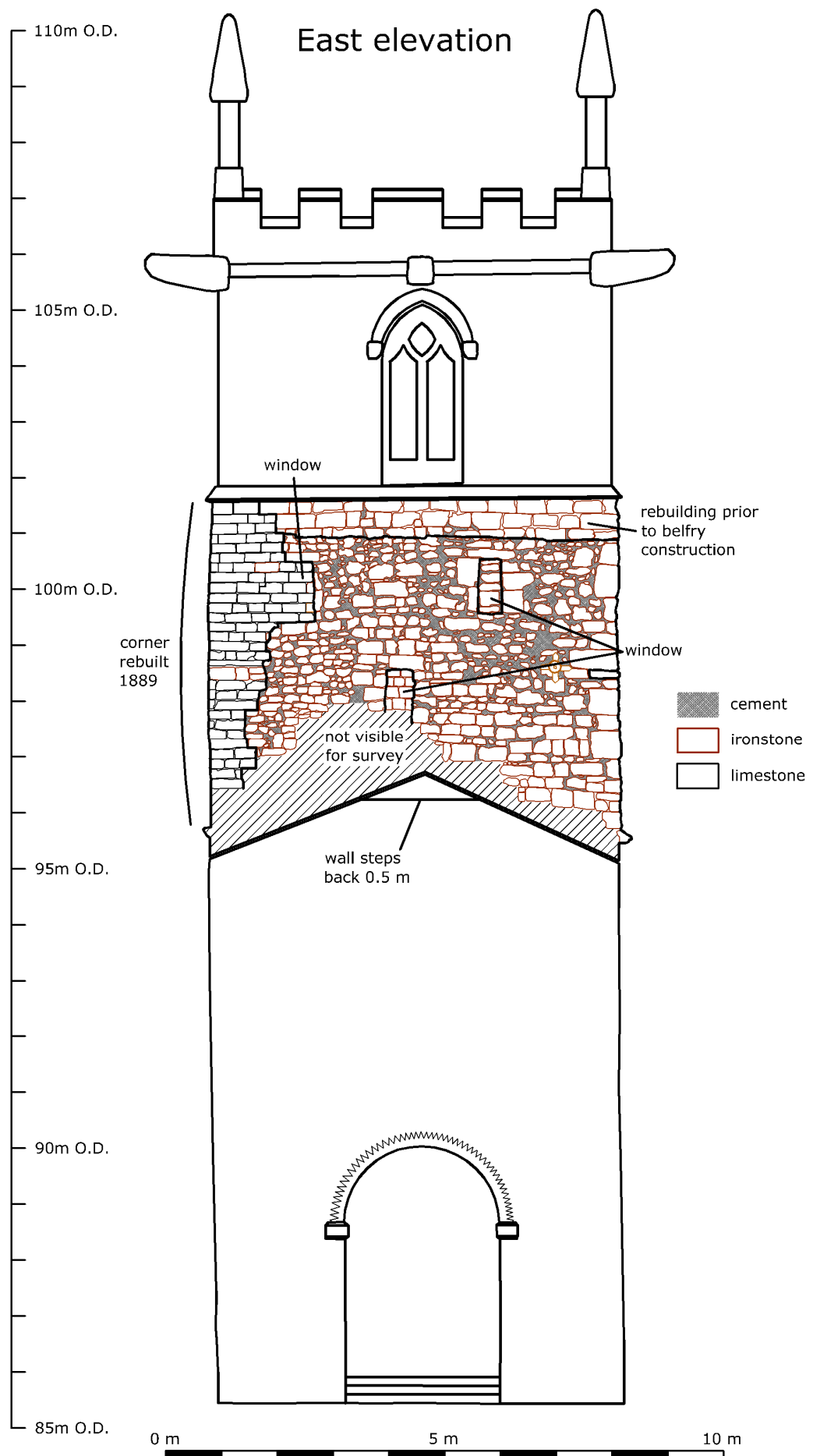


Fig. I.6.8 – Drawing of the east external elevation

The third stage of the elevation extends to a height of 15.65m. As with the second stage its visible, northern, quoins are larger than the stones of the rest of the elevation, and are laid in no obvious pattern. Two blocked flat-headed openings are visible in this stage of the elevation. The northern has megalithic jambs and a long lintel, but no obvious sill, and is 0.45 m wide and 0.95 m tall with a sill-height of 14.10m. The southern is obscured externally by the rebuilding of the southeast corner of the tower. It is 0.45 m wide 0.90 m tall with probable sill-height of 14.00 m. Both are visible inside the tower, but it is unclear whether they are later insertions. They face out over the market-place, the focus of medieval Caistor. They were blocked between 1845 and 1863 (compare figs I.6.5 & I.6.9).



Fig. I.6.9 – Caistor church after 1863, viewed from the north (Binnall 1932, 4).

South elevation (figs I.6.10 & I.6.11)

The bottom stage of the south elevation is partially obscured by the present nave and two later buttresses. With the exception of the lowermost four courses, the rubble masonry to the west of the central buttress is small and irregular in both size and coursing. To the east of the central buttress the masonry is relatively large and regular in size and coursing, except between 5.45 m and 6.80 m above ground level, when it resembles the small, irregular masonry to the west of the central buttress.



Fig. I.6.10 – The external south elevation of the tower

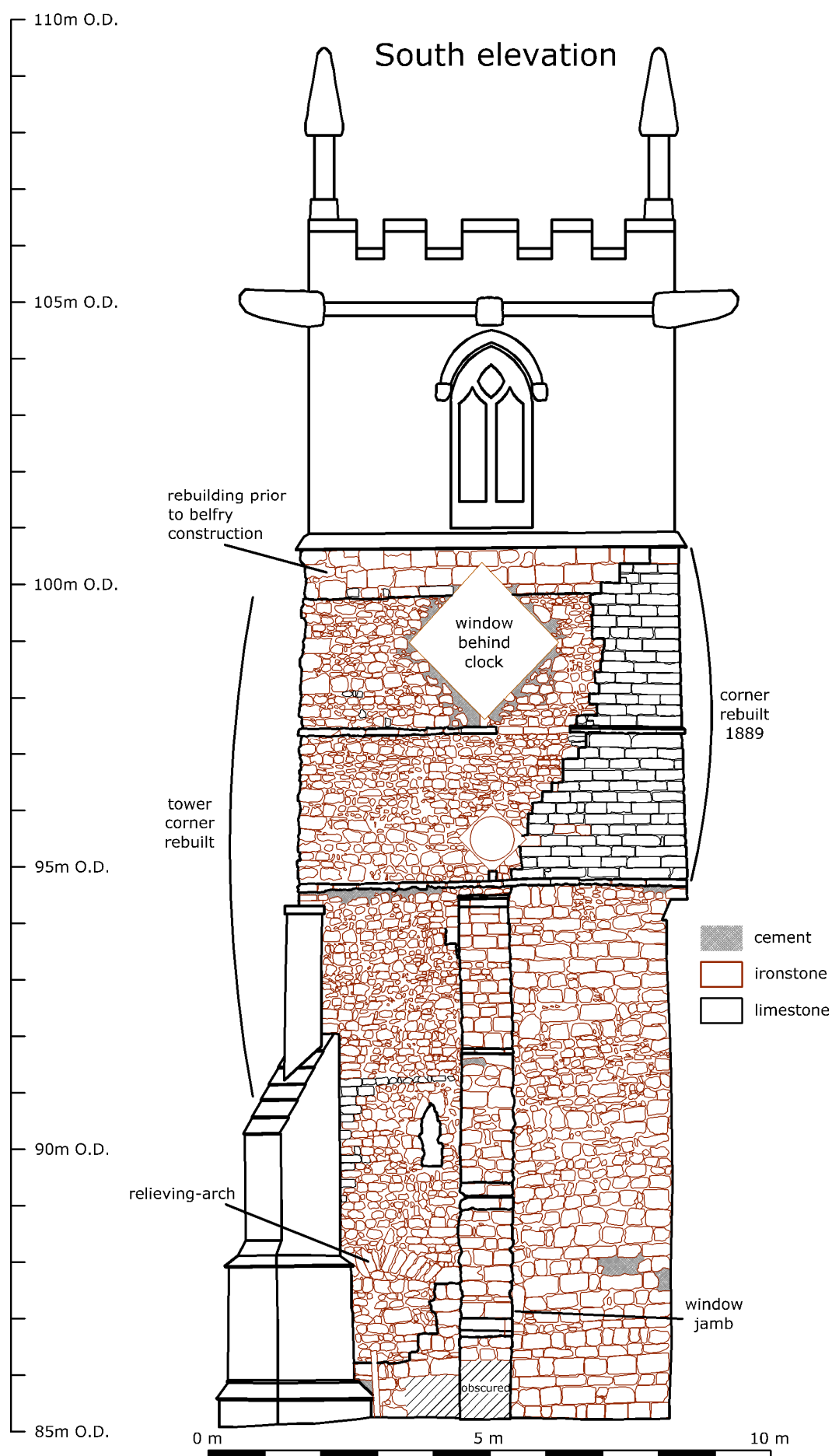


Fig. I.6.11 – Drawing of the external south elevation of the tower

Three openings are visible in this stage of the elevation. A blocked window is largely concealed by the central buttress, leaving only its vertically-laid eastern jamb-stones visible. From the inside it was visible as an apparently single-splayed round-headed window with ashlar voussoirs, of Norman appearance, prior to the modern replastering of the tower-space (fig. I.6.15). The second opening is another single-splayed window, 0.30 m wide by up to 1.10 m tall, with its sill at 4.45m from ground level. Its head is formed of a pair of rubble voussoirs which would probably have been round-headed originally. The third opening, at the bottom of the western half of the elevation, has been interpreted as a doorway (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 129-30), but three things militate against this. Firstly, it does not interrupt the lower four courses of the elevation, so it cannot have been a doorway. Secondly, its head is very flat, almost segmental, and does not look as if it could have supported the weight of the tower above. Thirdly, it overlaps the tower's west wall. It is probably a relieving-arch, the counterpart to one at the south end of the tower's west elevation. The tower is known to be structurally unstable: it is supported by many buttresses, and its southeast corner partially collapsed in 1889 despite the rebuilding of the buttresses the previous year (Saunders 2003, 16). If the tower's southwest corner had indeed become unstable or collapsed in the medieval period, and been rebuilt with a relieving-arch, it would explain the difference in masonry between the east and west halves of this elevation. This is also arguable for the tower's west elevation (see below).

The second stage begins 9.45 m above ground level. Its eastern half was entirely rebuilt after the collapse of 1889. Its western half resembles the small, irregular rubble of the corresponding half of the elevation below, supporting the interpretation that this part of the tower has also been rebuilt. The haphazardly-laid quoins at the western end of the stage are larger than the rest of the masonry at this level.

The third stage extends from 12.10 m to 15.40 m above ground level. Like the second stage, the eastern end of its fabric dates to 1889. The fabric to the west consists of small, irregular rubble of the western side of much of this elevation. Its quoins are larger than this fabric, but laid to no clear pattern. The only opening is, as with the north elevation, hidden behind a large iron clock-face: like its northern counterpart it is round-headed, Norman in appearance, and has no splay.

West elevation (figs I.6.12 & I.6.13)

Fig. I.6.12 – The external west elevation of the tower

The first stage of the west elevation is of irregular coursed masonry, partially obscured by later buttresses. The size and regularity of this masonry appears to decrease towards the south side of the stage, supporting the evidence from the south elevation that much of the southwest corner of the tower has been rebuilt. A possible vertical break in the masonry above the southern of the central pair of buttresses may indicate the line of this rebuilding, although this may be an artefact of the limit of cement repointing.

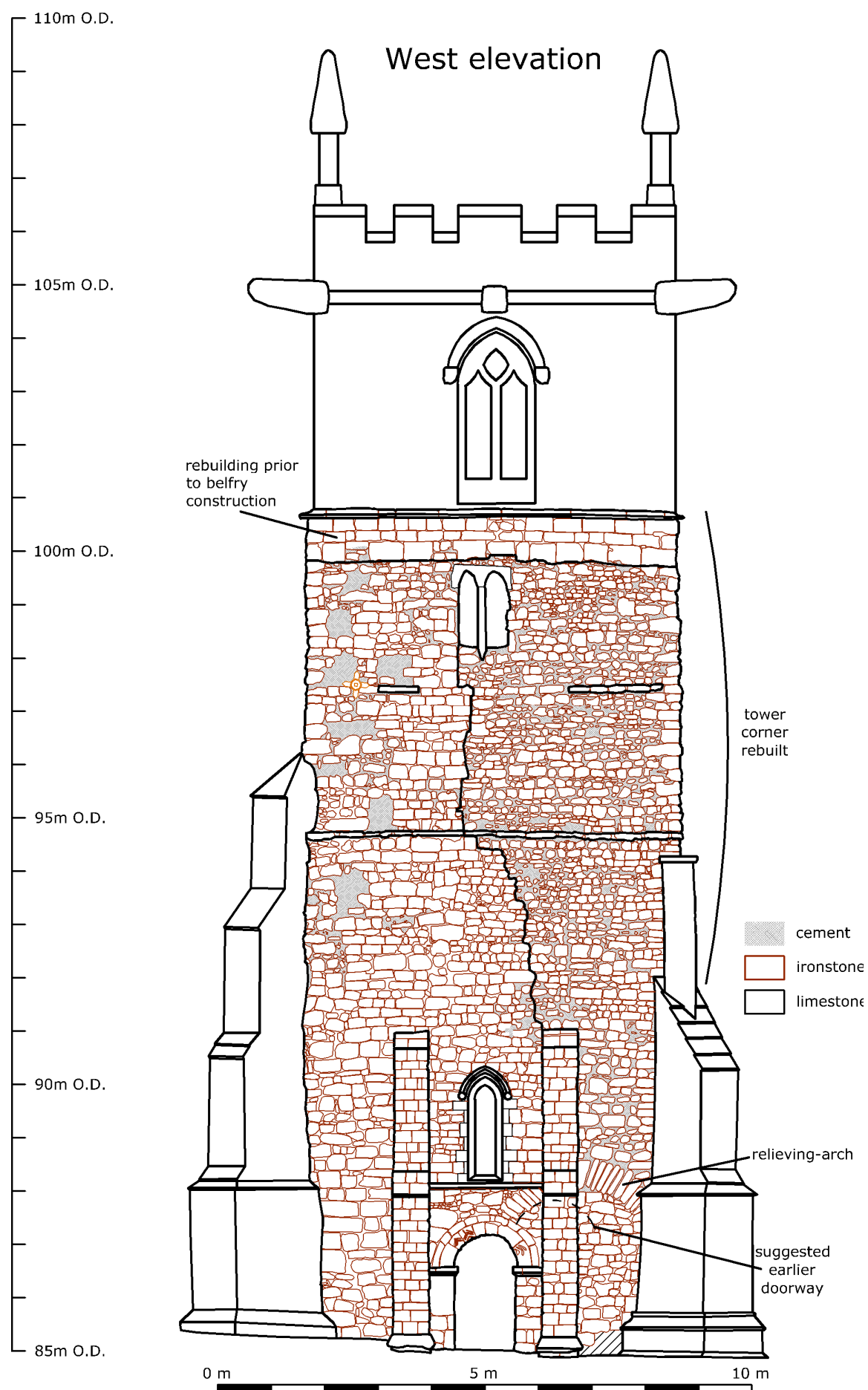


Fig. I.6.13 – Drawing of the external west elevation of the tower

Assuming the southwest corner of the tower did collapse in the pre-modern period, the round-headed blocked opening at ground level at the south end of this elevation can be interpreted as a relieving arch, the counterpart to that on the south elevation. Its location makes little sense as a doorway, and it would have opened into the thickness of the tower's south wall.

A buttress partially obscures this relieving-arch. Interestingly, the voussoirs to the south of this buttress are larger and more regular than those to the north, and both sets of voussoirs do not appear to meet at the apex of the archway. This suggests that the northern set of voussoirs belong to an earlier feature, probably a doorway, which would have been blocked following the presumed collapse of the tower's southwest corner and strengthened by the relieving arch.

This proposed early doorway is cut by the doorway in the centre of the elevation, the tower's present western entrance. It has large and comparatively well-dressed jambs supporting a round head of large dressed voussoirs bearing a deep but heavily-weathered chevron ornament, topped by a prominent hood-mould. The head springs from a substantial chamfered impost and is thoroughly Norman in character. The present threshold stone is modern (Field and North 1996, 3). It is suggested here as a later insertion, although the fabric surrounding it is too heavily obscured to confirm this. If so, though, it provides a *terminus ante quem* for the blocking of the proposed earlier doorway and, by extension, for the rebuilding of the entire southwest corner of the tower. The final opening on this stage of the elevation was inserted in 1889 (Saunders 2003, 16).

The second stage begins at 9.75 m from ground level. Its fabric is very similar to that of the first stage; like the first stage its southern half appears to have been rebuilt in small, irregular masonry. The quoins at this level have no clear pattern.

The third stage extends from 12.45 m to 15.70 m above ground level. Its fabric is very similar to that of the second stage, and again it may reveal a campaign of rebuilding to the south. The quoins at this level, where visible, are again irregular. An apparent two-light pointed window sits in the centre, which led the Taylors (1965, 128) to date the entire stage to the Early English period. However, from inside the window is visible as having a round head window with no internal splay, and is of the type seen at this level on the tower's north and south faces (fig. I.6.17). Its sill is 13.30 m above ground level, and it is 0.95 m wide and up to 1.40 m tall.

The internal elevations of the tower

Ground and first-floor levels

At ground level, the tower has been fitted out with a kitchen and toilet and subdivided with the insertion of a new upper floor, concealing much of the tower's fabric. Frustratingly, internal elevation drawings are mentioned in 1996 in advance of this work (cited in Field and North 1996, 2), but they appear never to have been carried out. A series of photos of this part of the tower do, however, exist (figs I.6.14-I.6.16) (English Heritage 1995), which combined with the plan of the tower made during the 1996 excavations (Field and North 1996) provide a basis for description.

The 1996 excavations uncovered a small area of the post-medieval mortar floor of the tower, beneath which was a shallow pit interpreted as a hearth for working lead. This pit is stratigraphically later than the construction of the tower, since it is cut by a pit which is in turn cut into the sandstone rubble foundations of the tower. A piece of 12th century pottery was found which may have belonged to the latter pit or to the tower foundations themselves (Field and North 1996, 3).



Fig. I.6.14 – The internal north elevation of the ground floor of the tower, taken in 1995 (English Heritage 1995)

The fabric of the north elevation (fig. I.6.14) is large and regularly-coursed, as outside. Notable is the doorway, which seems to have been blocked in two phases so as

to form a window, which was itself later blocked. This window has a sill height of 1.40m above floor level. The jambs and voussoirs of this window were replaced with carefully dressed stones – probably limestone – when it was converted from a doorway. These match the window sill, implying that the new stones are original rather than being part of a nineteenth-century restoration. They give a probable post-Conquest date to this work. The blocked window to the west of the doorway is not visible internally, but it may be disguised by the surviving areas of plaster.

Very little is visible of the internal east elevation, which was not photographed in 1995. One area without plaster confirms it to have the same masonry as the other internal elevations.



Fig. I.6.15 – The internal south elevation of the ground floor of the tower, taken in 1995 (English Heritage 1995)

Much of the fabric of the south elevation (fig. I.6.15) consists of large and well-coursed ironstone, which occurs in areas corresponding to those visible externally. This includes the bottom few courses of the area where the relieving arch is located externally, further supporting the argument that this was not a doorway. A vertical break

in construction is visible about 1.0 m from ground level and 0.5 m from the internal west wall of the tower. This does not correspond with the eastern extent of the relieving arch outside, further evidence that this feature was never a doorway. This break may instead represent the proposed collapse and rebuilding of the southwest corner of the tower, although it is no longer possible to establish how far up the elevation it extends. A second apparent vertical break, about 0.25 m from the internal east elevation, does not correspond with any known feature.

The lower blocked window in this elevation, largely obscured externally, is revealed as being round-headed with relatively rough jambs and sill but small and regular dressed voussoirs which may be later replacements. It is 0.85 m wide and up to 2.00 m tall, with its sill 1.30 m from ground level. It is blocked with dressed limestone, implying that it was open until the external buttress was added, probably in the nineteenth century. The upper blocked window is visible internally as a single-splayed round-headed window 1.20 m wide, and of unknown height.

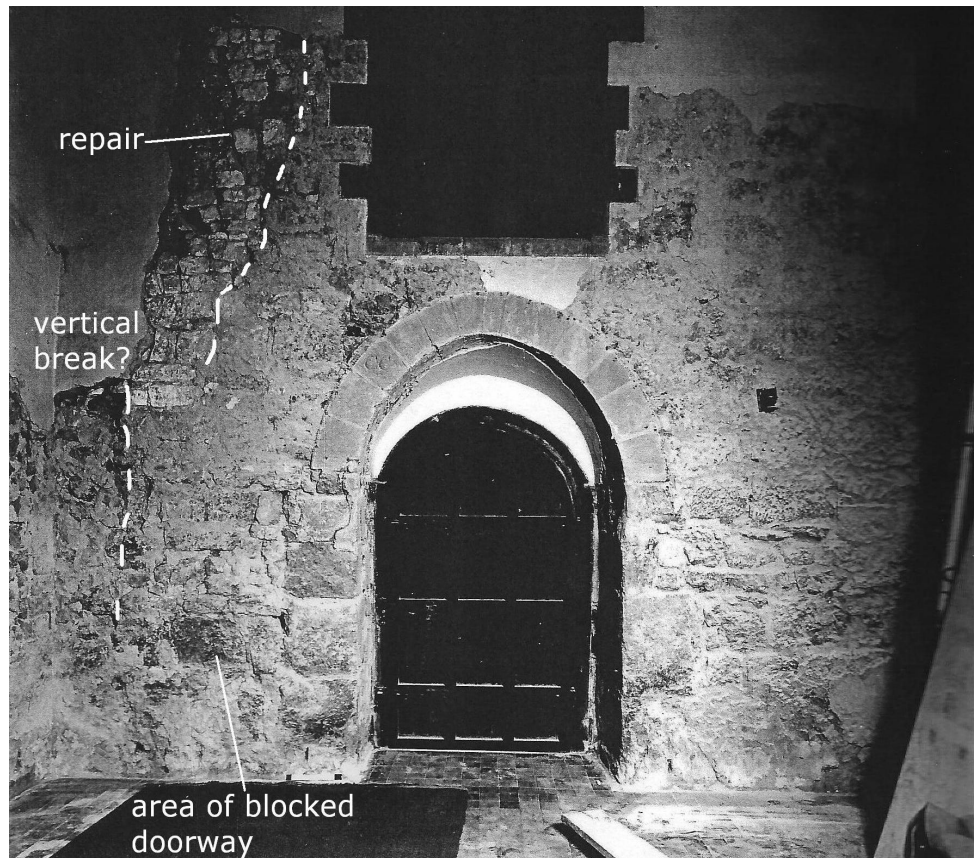


Fig. I.6.16 – The internal west elevation of the ground floor of the tower, taken in 1995 (English Heritage 1995)

The northern half of the west internal elevation (fig. I.6.16) is of large and well-coursed ironstone, which matches the external elevation. To the south of the central doorway this fabric is disturbed, which reflects the tower's exterior. The lower c. 1.0 m

of this part of the elevation is of very irregular masonry, both dressed stones and rubble, laid more haphazardly than to the north of the doorway. It incorporates a pair chalk blocks with prominent narrow tooling. This may represent the blocking of the proposed early doorway visible externally; further traces of it are hidden both by plaster and by the Norman doorway which cuts it. This blocking is interrupted by a vertical break about 0.35 m from the tower's south wall, which corresponds to the southern jamb of the blocked doorway in this location, obscured externally by the relieving-arch that appears to have replaced it. It may also represent the proposed collapse and rebuilding of the tower's southeast corner. The later limestone visible above this fabric may represent a further collapse or repair in this location, perhaps associated with the rebuilding of the tower's buttresses in 1888 (Saunders 2003, 16). The central doorway of this elevation has large, almost megalithic dressed ironstone jambs and smaller but better-dressed voussoirs. The internal splay of the 1889 window lies above; the rest of the elevation is not visible.

Second floor level

The present second floor level was the first floor of the tower prior the works carried out in 1996. It is plastered and further obscured by modern furnishings, but two things of note are visible. Firstly, the window on the north wall, being that visible high up on the first stage of the tower's external elevation, is revealed as having a well-dressed pointed internal splay, of probable 13th century date. This window does not appear to be an insertion, so has probably been rebuilt internally. Secondly, the east wall steps back by 0.20 m at the approximate level of the exterior transition from the tower's first to second stage, which may have been to lighten the upper levels of the tower.

Third floor level

The present third floor level is again plastered, and obscured by the tower clock mechanism. A number of things of interest are visible. Firstly, the ostensibly two-light window on the third stage of the west elevation is visible here as a round-headed window with carefully-dressed reveals, soffit and chamfered impost-mouldings (fig. I.6.17). Two others, of the same type, are visible on the north and south elevations, obscured externally by the faces of the clock. The east wall, as on the floor below, steps back by 0.20 m. Two of the three flat-headed openings in the external elevation are visible here (fig. I.6.17).



Fig. I.6.17 – The third floor of the tower. **Left:** The internal east elevation. **Right:** The west window, visible internally as Norman rather than Early English work.

The rest of the church

The rest of the church consists of a nave with north and south aisles, a north porch, a chancel and a vestry. The present chancel was entirely rebuilt in 1848 (Binnall 1932). The aisles were added in the thirteenth century and extend either side of the western half of the chancel, although they do not communicate with it. On the east side of the nave, at the junction with the chancel, are the engaged sandstone angle-shafts of the east side of a presumed Norman crossing (fig. I.6.18), implying that the church was cruciform at this time. Each has simple bell-shaped Romanesque base and but no capital, and a concave moulding running to its full height in the wall adjacent.



Fig. I.6.18 – The northeast angle of the church crossing

Discussion

Building materials

The tower is almost wholly built of ironstone, which is locally available from the Lincoln Edge. There is little evidence for the re-use of Roman stone in the tower, aside from some miss-matched tooling visible in the interior. This is perhaps surprising considering the location of the church within a Roman enclosure of Tealby limestone, a much better building material, found incorporated into many post-medieval buildings in the town (Rahtz 1960, 180). The Roman enclosure is therefore likely to have been upstanding and deliberately curated during the construction of the tower, which has interesting implications for the interpretation of this site.

Building sequence

Phase I

The initial building on the site seems to have been a free-standing tower, or possibly a tower with an eastern chancel attached to the east. It was built on sandstone rubble foundations which seem to have extended at least 2.00m beyond the walls of the tower, suggesting that the builders were aware of the poor quality of the ground on this site (Field and North 1996, 3). The level of the tower floor has not risen much since it was built, since the rubble foundations uncovered in excavation are only *c.* 0.20 m beneath the present floor. This further implies that the tower was originally accessed up a flight of steps, presumably into its original doorway on the south side of the west elevation.

The evidence for the tower being formerly free-standing is as follows. The thickness of the tower's east wall, at 1.80 m, is extraordinary, nearly double that of its other three walls. However, the east wall above the present nave roof is approximately in line with the west wall of the nave, and is only 1.30 m thick, implying that the nave and the tower abut instead of the one re-using the existing wall of the other, as is usually the case. The poor ground may explain this trepidation on the part of the builders. This abutment can clearly be seen from within the church, just beneath the apex of the nave roof, where the wall steps back. Further evidence for this is the fact that, highly unusually, the tower is significantly higher than the nave, by 0.53 m, and is accessed via a short flight of steps. That the tower floor has not been artificially raised since it was built is proved by the proximity of its foundations to the present floor level. This implies that the tower pre-dated the nave and was built upon the highest place in the area with no thought given to any future nave. It may even have been built upon an artificial mound, such is the instability of the ground beneath. When the nave was subsequently added, the choice facing the builders was either to heighten a larger area of ground to the east of the tower, which would have made a poor foundation, or simply to level it off and correct the height difference between the two structures with a flight of steps. This evidence, together with the early nature of the tower's dateable features compared to the nave, demonstrates that it is the earlier building. As an aside, the 1996 excavation investigated the junction between the tower and the nave, but was unable to elucidate their relationship (Field and North 1996, 2).

It is unknown whether the tower originally had a chancel. The present tower-arch is centred to the present nave, and is off-centre to the tower, indicating that it is a later insertion, as it would have to be if the walls of the tower and nave abut. It is

therefore possible that the tower was originally entirely free-standing. There is also no evidence that it originally had a belfry.

The height of the original tower is unknown. It would probably have been at least as high as the top of the third stage – c. 15.5 m – but is unlikely to have risen to a further stage, since the Norman addition of openings in three of the faces of the third stage would make sense as belfry-openings, something to be expected in the topmost stage of a tower. The similarity of the fabric across the three stages of the tower indicates that it was not raised from an earlier, shorter structure, as has been suggested (Stocker and Everson 2006, 6).

The only openings original to this first phase are likely to have been the blocked doorway on the south side of the west elevation, the three windows on the upper part of the east elevation, the lower two windows on the north elevation and the lower window on the south elevation. The upper window on the north elevation and the lower window on the south elevation both appear to have been subsequently modified.

Phase 2

The second phase consists of the probable collapse of the tower's southwest corner and its rebuilding with a pair of relieving-arches. This seems to have rendered the original west doorway redundant, which was subsequently replaced by the present west doorway in phase three. The reason for ascribing this event to the pre-Norman period is the relative roughness of the arches' voussoirs and their similarity with the voussoirs of the original west doorway. The lower south window may have been modified at this time, since it is adjacent to the area of collapse.

Phase 3

The third phase consists of the insertion of the present west doorway, the windows on the north, south and west of the third stage, the addition of the present nave and tower-arch. Although these features have no stratigraphic relationship, the tower-arch, upper windows and west doorway are all of a solidly Norman date, and would be consistent with the refurbishment of the tower when it was converted into a conventional west tower. The tower-arch was located central to the west wall of the nave rather than the east wall of the tower, implying their contemporaneity.

Dating

The limited excavations of the tower did not resolve its date of construction. A 12th century potsherd was found either in the tower's foundations or in the fill of a pit cut into these foundations (Field and North 1996, 3). The Norman features of the tower – the west doorway, tower-arch and upper windows on the north, west and south wall – all seem to be later insertions or modifications, which indicates that the first phase of construction was earlier than these dateable features. The two-stage chamfered plinth found running below ground-level along the tower's north wall is indicative of Norman rather than Saxon work (Field and North 1996, 2), but both chamfered and two-stage plinths are known from Anglo-Saxon contexts (Taylor 1978, 966).

The first phase of construction has one dateable feature: the width compared to the height of the window in the lower part of the north wall indicates that it was double-played, indicative of late Anglo-Saxon work (Taylor 1978, 836). The megalithic head of the upper window of the first stage of the north wall is also Anglo-Saxon in character. Additionally, the voussoirs of the original west doorway are quite unlike Norman building practice. The excavated north plinth may therefore indicate a date in the middle of the 11th century.

Interpretation

The tower in context

Caistor's Roman enclosure

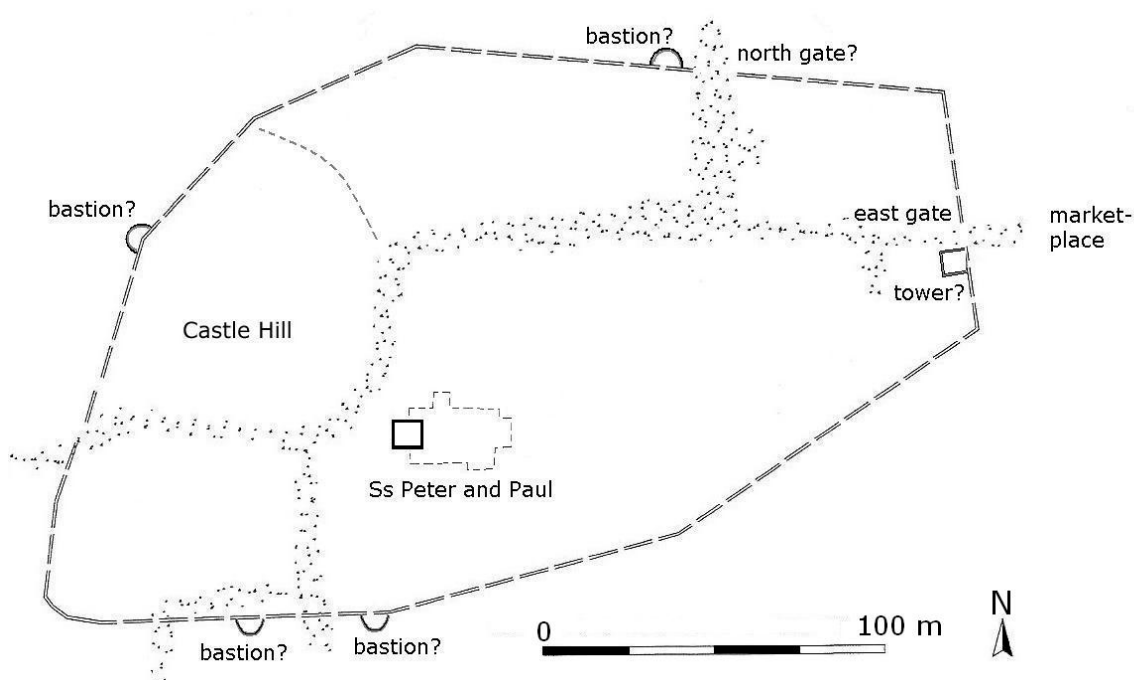


Fig. I.6.19 – The Roman enclosure at Caistor (adapted from Burnham and Wachter 1990, 241).

The tower stands within an irregularly-shaped Roman enclosure, *c.* 270m east/west by 160m north/south, which had Tealby limestone walls, bastions along its south and possibly west and north walls, and gate-towers on its east and possibly north sides (fig. I.6.19) (Rahtz 1960, 183-5). Its irregular shape is due to its location on a promontory stretching west from the town's present market-place. The absence of limestone *spolia* in the fabric of the tower suggests that this enclosure was kept relatively intact until the later medieval period, when it was widely used in the town's buildings. This is supported by the fact that the roads within the enclosure generally respect their Roman predecessors (Bell 2005, 201).

An unpublished 1964 excavation on the north side of the market place suggests that the Roman enclosure stands on the site of earlier defences (Hunter 1964). A bank and 'V' shaped ditch extended east of the Roman work which may have undergone refurbishment, potentially with a stone facing to the existing earth bank. The only stratified pottery from the excavation was from a 12th or 13th century medieval oven on the site, which provides a *terminus ante quem* for the defences, but one unstratified late Saxon rim fragment was also found. The brief existing account of these excavations contains no drawings, however, so it is difficult to properly interpret. Whilst it is quite possible that the Roman enclosure was preceded by a hillfort, the existence of an early medieval annexe to these works remains speculative.

The east gate of the enclosure may have been relatively intact into the early medieval period. Philip Rahtz (1960, 183-5) noted the presence of a tower here, but went into no further detail. On the south side of the enclosure's east gate, an 18th century house has a remarkable cellar of large, coursed, roughly dressed Tealby limestone, indicative of Roman work (fig. I.6.20).



Fig. I.6.20 – Possible Roman masonry in a cellar on the site of the Roman fort east gate.

The suggested Roman work survives to a height of up to 1.60 m; the finish of the masonry and the fact that it has a slight batter both suggests that this was above Roman ground level. The north, south and west walls of the cellar are of large, roughly dressed ironstone, suggesting they are of a later date (fig. I.6.21). They have no batter, and are separated from the suggested Roman work by doorways leading east and south (fig. I.6.22). They have square openings with megalithic lintels, between 0.5 m and 0.65 m in size and with sills between 0.65 m and 0.75 m above ground level. These openings do not align and so are unlikely to have been beam-slots. They were probably windows, they are quite unlike Roman work.



Fig. I.6.21 – View of the ironstone masonry of the north wall of the cellar: compare with fig. I.6.20.

These walls are topped by handmade bricks from the construction of the house above, indicating that they are pre-18th century in date. If the openings are windows, it implies they were constructed in the medieval period, prior to the rise in ground level in the town. The refurbishment of the eastern defences of the enclosure prior to the 12th or 13th centuries (Hunter 1964) provides a possible context for their construction. Further research is needed, but it is possible that either a curated Roman tower or even a stone defensive structure adorned the east gate of the tower-nave's enclosure in the early medieval period.

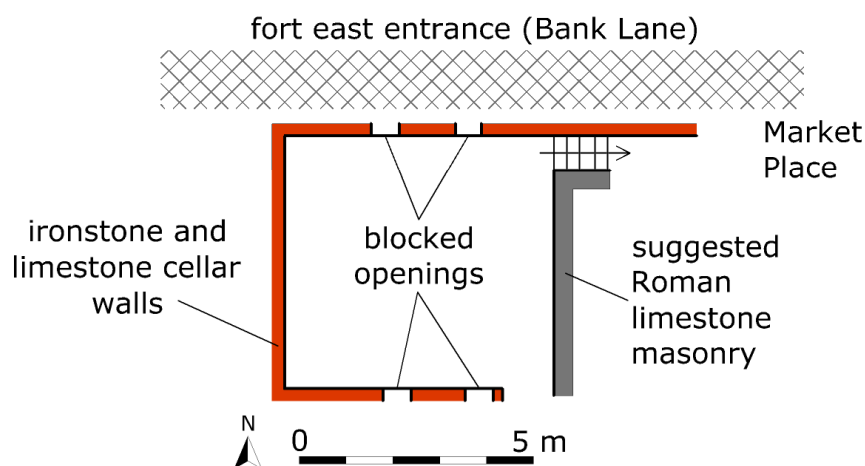


Fig. I.6.22 – Plan of the cellar, showing area of suggested Roman work the ironstone-built walls of a later, possibly medieval, structure (see figs I.6.20 & I.6.21).

Early medieval Caistor

There have been a number of finds of early medieval material in Caistor. Some unstratified pottery potentially of this period was found associated with the Roman enclosure (Rahtz 1960, 179). Saxo-Norman pottery was found in 1966 to the north of the church, on the site of the Grammar School (Whitwell 1967, 46-7). Silver *sceattae* of Eadberht (737-58), Coenwulf (810-21) and anon. (700-715) are known (Blackburn 1993, 87), together with a handful of other, unpublished examples (Ulmschneider 2000, 31). These combine with a further early, ‘Byzantine’, coin known from antiquarian records (cited in Everson and Stocker 1999, 124) to suggest that Caistor was an important middle Anglo-Saxon market centre (Ulmschneider 2000, 33).

In terms of funerary material, a 5th century hanging-bowl is known from the enclosure (Myres 1946); several burials of this same date were found in the nineteenth century immediately to the west of the enclosure, and within the enclosure on castle hill (Parsons 1973). A probable sixth-century furnished inhumation and cremation cemetery is known to a short distance to the north of the town, on the way to Fonaby (Meaney 1964, 155). A cemetery of apparent Roman origin was in use until the mid-late 8th century immediately outside the northeast corner of the town walls (Savage and Sleep 2012). A group of five potentially 11th century stone grave-covers, now lost, are recorded as being found under the church floor in 1862, and an inscription was found near to the church in 1770, discussed below (Everson and Stocker 1999, 121-5, 299).

Middle Anglo-Saxon Caistor: a monastic site

Discussion of early medieval Caistor has hitherto focused upon whether it was an important monastic site, or even the seat of the Bishop of Lindsey. The re-use of Roman

enclosures as religious sites is well attested: they were commonly converted to Christian use during the Conversion period, typically by royal agency, as part of an engagement with *Romanitas*. In some sources, ‘ceastre’ was equivalent to ‘minster’ (Blair 1992, 235-9). In the most recent summary of the subject, Tyler Bell (2005, 133-8) proposed that such re-used enclosures may have been characterised by potentially sacred elements such as springs: Caistor has three or four ‘healing’ springs within its enclosure (Johnson 1912, 97), although Bell (2005, 200) dismisses this as circumstantial.

There is some positive evidence for a minster on the site. The most important dates from well before the construction of the tower: a fragmentary inscribed stone was discovered in 1770 on nearby Castle Hill. Although it is now lost it survives in antiquarian drawings, and a full account of it is given in Everson and Stocker (1999, 121-5). It consisted of a large slab with the partial inscription of eighth- to ninth-century date, recording a donation or similar action by an ‘Ecgeberht’. It is interpreted as the dedication or altar stone from within a church, and is therefore argued to confirm the presence of an early, pre-Viking stone church on the site, possibly part of an early monastic complex.

There is further evidence for Caistor acting as an early minster. As the centre of a soke at the time of Domesday, the chapels of that soke would have been dependent upon it (Sawyer 1998, 63; *contra* Owen 1971, 2). Early medieval monastic complexes often had more than one church (Blair 1992, 239): there is limited evidence for a second church about 50 m to the north of the tower, within the Roman enclosure on the site of the present grammar school. Early 18th tradition held it to have been dedicated to St Mary, and late 13th and early 14th century names in the town refer to ‘Sayntmariland’ (summarised in Everson and Stocker 1999, 124). A cemetery containing 8th century burials located immediately *outside* the Caistor’s Roman walls – indicative of the cemetery’s Roman origin – further suggests that the settlement remained a cult focus throughout the early middle ages. It went out of use by the end of the 8th century, suggesting that the putative minster was constructed within Caistor’s walls at this time (Savage and Sleep 2012).

The interpretation of Caistor as an early see is not strong. Lindsey is known to have been a bishopric from 678 until c. 872, when the see moved to Dorchester-on-Thames due to the Viking invasions. It was revived in Lindsey for a brief period under Ethelred II, before being re-founded at Lincoln in 1072 (Sawyer 1998, 237-8). Several potential early monastic sites in Lindsey are possible candidates for the former whereabouts of the cathedral: Caistor, Grantham, Horncastle, Louth, Stow and Lincoln

have all been suggested. Of these, Lincoln is the obvious candidate (Bassett 1989). It was the ancient mother-church of a considerable area of Lindsey, and received tithes from these areas (Owen 1971, 1-37). When the see was moved from Dorchester, Lincoln became the new cathedral. The record of a church council of 803 (Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum* no. 312) locates the cathedral at *Syddensis civitas*, again identified with Lincoln (Sawyer 1998, 63, 79).

Late Anglo-Saxon Caistor: a centre of secular power

By the eleventh century, Caistor's former monastic significance seems to have dwindled, as it became a small town and a secular power centre. A mint had been instituted there in the late tenth century, under Edward the Martyr and Ethelred II (Everson and Stocker 1999, 15). These coins represent the first recorded instance of the name *Caistor*, 'the Roman Station', as 'CASTR' in 975-8 (Cameron 1991, 87-8). Their existence is significant as by the eleventh century even the smallest urban *burhs*, even those which were little more than royal manors, were the locations of mints (Stenton 1947, 528-9). Monasteries, on the other hand, were only exceptionally granted this function, and even then it applied to only a few of the most powerful institutions with explicit royal assent (*e.g.* Bury St Edmunds: Gransden 2007, 238).

By the mid-11th century, Caistor – together with nearby Hundon – was a royal soke in the hands of the Earl Morcar of Mercia. Its *Domesday Book* entry is as follows:

In Caistor and Hundon, Earl Morcar had 3 caracutes of land to the geld. [There is] land for 6 ploughs. The king has 1 plough there is demesne; and 40 villans and 12 sokemen with 3 ploughs. There is a church and a priest, which the Bishop of Lincoln claims. There are 4 mills [rendering] 13s 4d, and 60 acres of meadow. TRE worth £30; now £50. To the hall of this manor belong Cadney and Howsham, 4 caracutes of land to the geld. [There is] land for 8 ploughs. There are 2 ploughs in demesne; and 20 villans and 15 sokemen and 10 bordars having 9 ploughs. There are 360 acres of meadow.

(Williams and Martin 2002, 887).

The granting of the church to the Bishop of Lincoln occurred as late as 1072 (Owen 1994, 8). The town was also a population and trading centre, probably centred around the present market place (Everson *et al.*, 1991, 47-9). This implies that the enclosure, argued above to have remained standing into the medieval period, contained the church and hall mentioned in the *Domesday Book* as belonging to the earl. The mercantile area would have lain outside the east gate, which marked the transition to the manorial *curia*

beyond (fig. I.6.9). If this gate retained a Roman tower (see above), it may have acted as a lordly *burhgeat*.

The continuing high-status secular importance of the enclosure is indicated by the presence there of a castle in the Norman period. A 'Castle Hill' is recorded at the western end of the enclosure, although the name itself is only recorded in 1724 (Cameron 1991, 90). King Stephen fortified a castle there in 1143: it may have had a motte on Castle Hill and used the Roman walled enclosure as a bailey (Renn 1973, 353; Everson *et al.* 1991, 48). The suggested medieval phase of the putative tower at the east gate, discussed above, may belong to this castle.

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.6.23)

Communication routes

The Roman camp in which the tower-nave stands is high up on the western slopes of the Lincolnshire Wolds with an impressive view over the Ancholme Valley to Ermine Street, nine miles to the west, the main road between York and London. The Roman town was a strategic place rather than a population centre, intended to guard Caistor High Street, an ancient trackway and the main north-south route along the Wolds (Rahtz 1960, 175; Eagles 1989, 205). A minor Roman road (M 271) probably led from Caistor directly to join Ermine Street at Hibaldstow (Burnham and Wachter 1990, 240). To the south, a *herepath* ('army-way') ran east across the Wolds to Grimsby (Cox 1994b, 42): its western stretches were visible, including its junction with Ermine Street.

Assembly-sites

Caistor lies in Yarborough wapentake, whose meeting-place was located at Yarborough Camp, a well-preserved hillfort seven miles north up Caistor High Street (Cameron 1991, 100). It is intervisible with the tower-nave.

Beacon sites

There was a beacon place-name (*Tothemendailes*, 1291) in Normanby, thirteen miles southwest of Caistor (Cameron 2001, 192), over which the tower-nave would have had a good view. The beacon lay at the strategic junction of Ermine Street with a *herepath*, warning of danger along those routes.

Fortifications

The only significant fortification in the vicinity of Caistor was Yarborough Camp, with which the tower-nave was intervisible. The Camp is suggested to have been re-used as part of a system of Anglo-Saxon *burhs* in Lindsey (Cox 1994b, 47; for a late Anglo-Saxon date for this system, see Sawyer 1998, 84-6).

Estates

Earl Morcar had considerable interests all over in Lincolnshire in 1066. Although Caistor's tower-nave would have been a landmark along a twenty mile stretch of Ermine Street it was neither generally visible in the landscape, nor was it positioned with maximum visibility in mind. It was not a territorial marker.

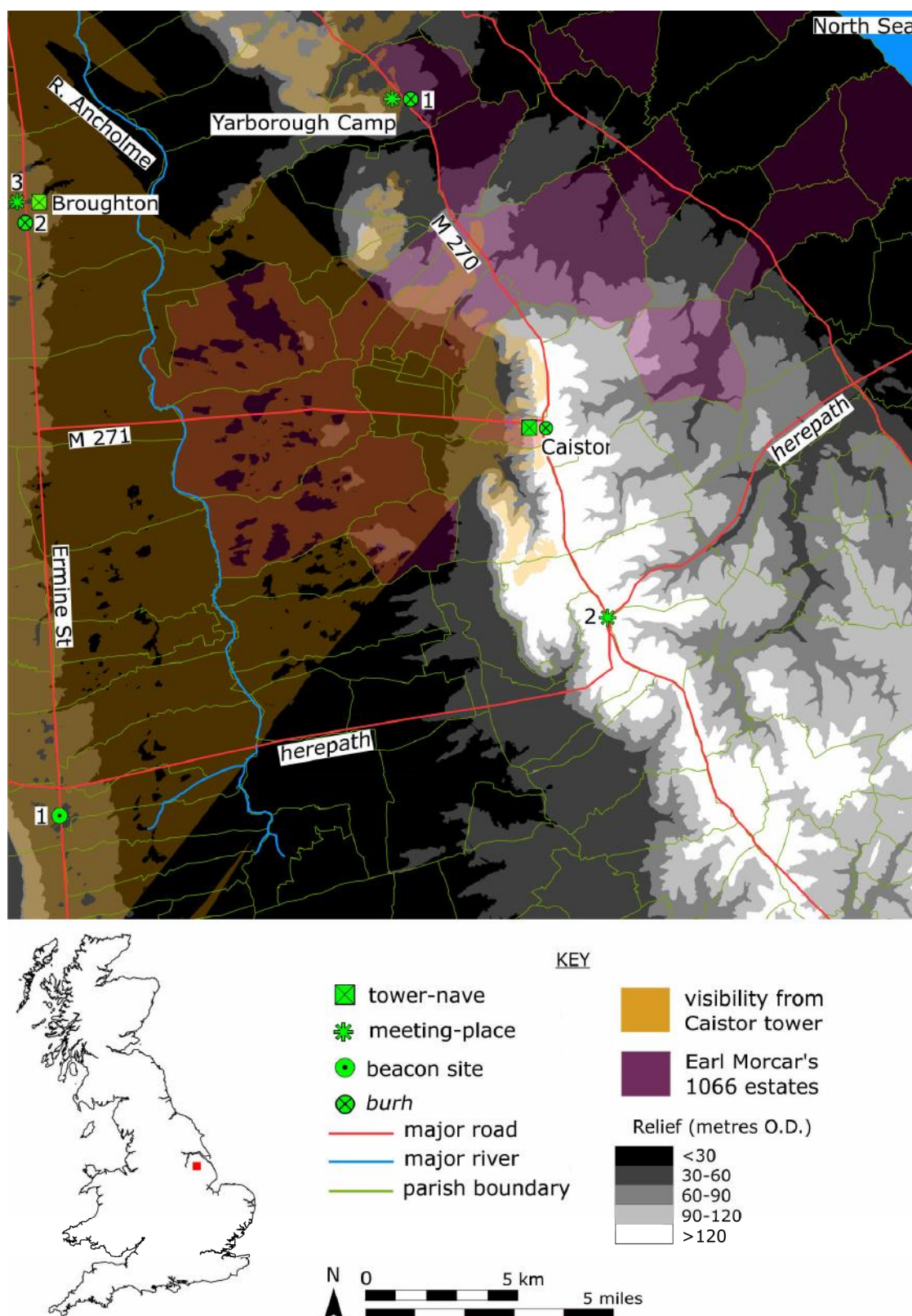


Fig. I.6.23 - The landscape context of Caistor

Key to fig. I.6.23*Assembly-sites*

1. Caistor lies in Yarborough wapentake, whose meeting-place was located at Yarborough Camp, a well-preserved hillfort that commands the Kirmington Gap (Cameron 1991, 100).
2. Walshcroft Wapentake met on the junction of Caistor High Street and the Grimsby *herepath* (Cameron 1992, 1).

3. Manley Wapentake met near Manby in Broughton parish (Cameron 2001, 4), possibly at a suggested burial-mound between Broughton and Ermine Street (Shapland 2008, 505).

Beacon sites

1. *Tothemendailes* (1291) in Normanby (Cameron 2001, 192).

Fortifications

1. Yarborough hillfort has an adjacent field-name *Burghil* (1240) (Cameron 1991, 100).
2. Broughton [5] (*Bertone* 1086) may have meant *burh-tūn* (see appendix I.5).

Conclusion

The church of SS Peter and Paul was a free-standing tower when first built, probably in the mid-11th century. It stands in a Roman enclosure, a probable site of early monastic importance. By the end of the 10th century, Caistor had become an important manorial centre and a developing town. It appears in the *Domesday Book* – around the time the tower-nave was built – in the hands of the Earl Morcar of Mercia, who had his hall and regional power-centre there. This is likely to have lain within Caistor's Roman enclosure, which appears to have been curated into the early medieval period, and which would become the site of a Norman castle. The enclosure has some evidence for a curated eastern gate-tower – a possible *burhgeat* – opening into the town's probable commercial focus, outside the enclosure around the present market-place. The tower-nave would have had made a useful watchtower, with excellent views over Ermine Street, a beacon site, and intervisibility with its hundred meeting-place. However, it was not positioned with this in mind, as better views were available nearby, and it would have made a poor territorial marker for Earl Morcar's estates.

Appendix I.7: St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury

Introduction

The monastery of SS Peter and Paul was founded soon after 597 by St Augustine. A church of St Mary was built immediately to the east *c.* 619 x 624, and to the east again a third church, of St Pancras, lay within the monastic precinct. Significant rebuilding occurred under the abbacy of Wulfric II (1047-59), who linked the main abbey church of SS Peter and Paul to the church of St Mary with an octagonal rotunda, which was never completed. A small chapel with a western apse was built to the west, to which a round western tower was subsequently added. Finally, a tower was completed to the southwest, in the abbey cemetery, and probably dedicated to St Mary as a tower-nave. The Anglo-Saxon abbey was then swept away under the Norman Abbot Scotland (1070-87) (summarised in Gem 1997, 108-9). Much of the Abbey was crudely excavated in the early 20th century (Hope 1915; Peers and Clapham 1928); more targeted excavations were undertaken by Saunders (1978). This has since been usefully synthesized (Sherlock and Woods, 1988; Gem 1997).



Fig. I.7.1 – Plan of the Anglo-Saxon abbey (Gem 1997, 97).

Description

The cemetery tower

The tower southwest of the Abbey church was excavated by Hope (1915) and re-excavated by Saunders (1978), from whom this description is taken. Its foundations consisted of a battered L-shaped mass of flint and ragstone rubble masonry with some re-used Roman material, which cut through burials from the abbey's Anglo-Saxon cemetery (fig. I.7.1). They measured 6.5 m east/west by up to 8.0 m north/south, with wall thicknesses of 2.75 m (west) and 2.80 m (south). The north and east walls are truncated by the construction of the southwest tower of the Norman Abbey church, but the foundations appear to have originally been *c.* 8.5 m square. They incorporated stone vaulting which, in view of the thickness of the foundations, implies that the tower was of considerably height (fig. I.7.2). Nearer ground level, the foundations made way for bands of ragstone set between flintwork, probably the external elevations of the tower. The tower was 3.8 m square internally, with a mortared tile floor.

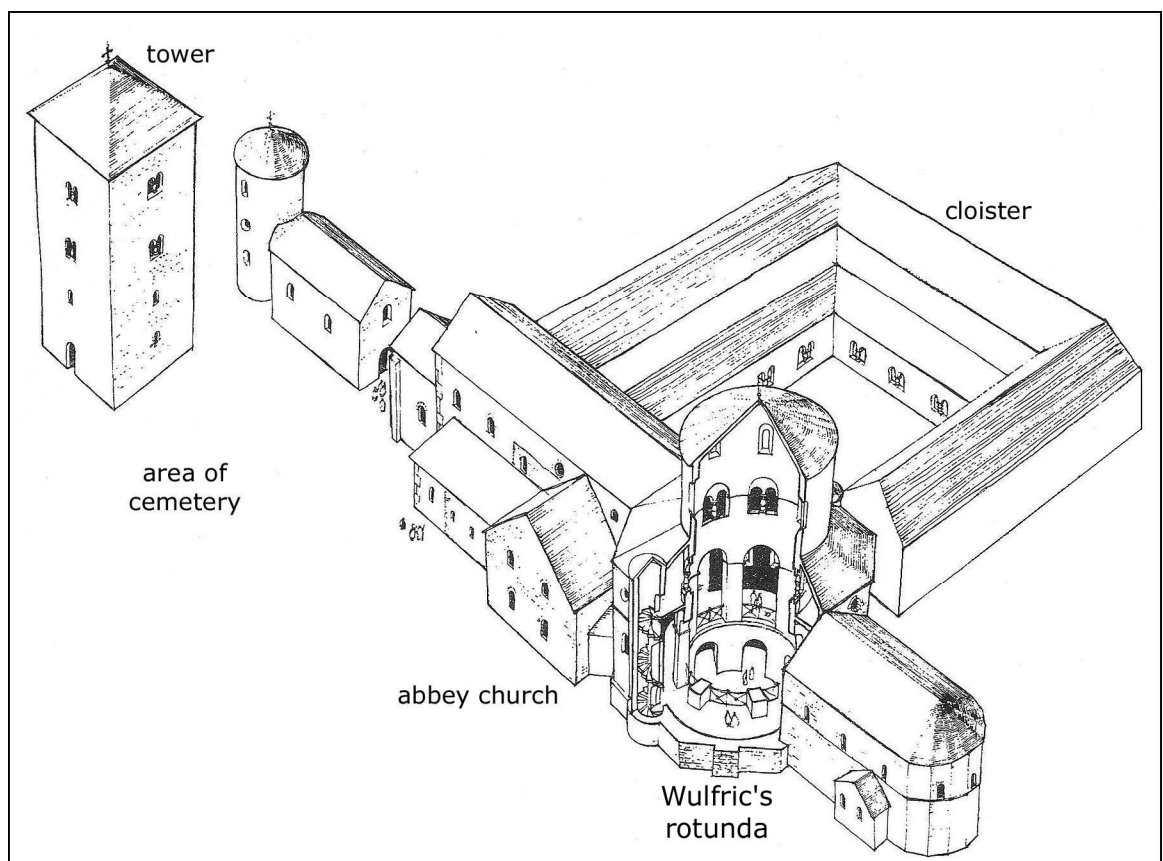


Fig. I.7.2 – Reconstruction of the abbey under abbot Wulfric II (1047-59) (Gem 1997, 111).

A substantial masonry foundation of similar construction lay 1.80m to the east of the tower, which was 8.00m across with a western wall at least 3.80m wide with no sign of internal vaulting. It was originally interpreted as a second Anglo-Saxon tower

forming a twin-towered gateway (Saunders 1978, 52), but later excavation revealed it was a 15th century buttress (Sherlock and Woods 1988, 74-86).

The date of the tower

The tower is stratigraphically later than Anglo-Saxon burials in its vicinity, which ceased c. 1000, on pottery evidence (Saunders 1978, 32, 52). The tower is earlier than the 12th century west front of the Norman abbey, which incorporated it. The different construction of the tower to the Norman abbey indicates that it is Anglo-Saxon work (Sherlock and Woods 1988, 82-3). A likely date for the tower's completion is provided by the 14th century chronicler William Thorne, a monk of the Abbey, who recorded a donation made in 1047 of 'a hundred marks for the building of the tower which was then under construction' (*centum marcas ad turris aedificationem quae tunc fuerat in construendo*) (Twysden 1652, col. 1784; Saunders 1978, 63 n.). Although Wulfric's rotunda could also be conceived of as a tower, its construction probably only began in 1049 (Clapham 1955).

After the Conquest the north and east walls of the tower were demolished. Abbot Scotland's original intention seems to have been to curate the south and west walls of the Anglo-Saxon tower to their full height as a clasping corner-turret: two phases of Norman foundations abut the tower, and the south aisle of the Norman Abbey church was realigned towards it. After Scotland's death, Abbot Wido (1087-99) instead constructed a pair of western towers that used the truncated Anglo-Saxon tower as a buttress (Woods 1982, 123). Its fabric remained partially visible throughout the middle ages; it was refaced with ashlar in the 15th century (Sherlock and Woods 1988, 86).

Interpretation

The tower in context

The cemetery tower appears to have contained an altar and functioned as a high-status mortuary chapel. At the end of the 11th century the chronicler Goscelin, a monk at the Abbey, recorded that Abbot Scotland demolished the 7th century church of St Mary in the early 1070s. He had the remains of several bishops and abbots as well as three kings of Kent, a king of the West Saxons, and several queens and royal children transferred into 'the western tower of the monastery before the altar of St Mary' until his new church was constructed (Saunders 1978, 51-2). The view of Peers and Clapham (1928, 210-11) was that this structure was the chapel constructed to the west of the church of SS Peter and Paul in the mid-11th century, which may have had a round western tower

or stair turret. However, the graves found within are of a later medieval date, and a ‘tower’ is specifically mentioned rather than a church. This makes the excavated cemetery tower the more likely candidate (Saunders 1978, 38, 51-2). This suggests that it was a tower-nave dedicated to St Mary, and of all the buildings in the Abbey it was thought the most suitable to house the royal and high-status ecclesiastical burials. This is in keeping with the association between tower-naves and high-status burials visible elsewhere in this study.

Use as a mortuary chapel would fit in with the tower’s location. It was not axially aligned with the other Abbey churches, and so must have been located in reference to a secondary feature, the abbey’s early medieval cemetery (fig. I.7.2) (Saunders 1978, 50). The monastic cemetery had moved to the east of the abbey church by the end of the 11th century, but the large lay cemetery remained in this part of the precinct throughout the middle ages (fig. I.7.3) (Tatton-Brown 1997, 131). The tower may therefore have acted as a mortuary chapel for this cemetery, and housed the bells required for funerary liturgy.



Fig. I.7.3 – The Anglo-Saxon abbey (shaded gray) in the context of the later medieval abbey precinct (modified from Tatton-Brown 1997, 124).

Excavations in 1964 uncovered the foundations of a later medieval free-standing bell-tower in the southeast part of the cemetery, possibly dated to *c.* 1100, which is known to have been in use until at least the 15th century (Tatton-Brown 1991, 78-9; 1997, 131). With the demolition of the Anglo-Saxon tower of St Mary and the extension of the lay cemetery further east away from the west towers of the Norman abbey, St Mary's presumed belltower function seems still to have been required.

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.7.4)

Communication routes

When it was completed, the massive foundations and additional vaulting of the tower suggests that it would have been an imposing structure of considerable height (Saunders 1978, 52). It has even been suggested as a defensible refuge, in the light of Viking incursions into Kent from the late 10th century onwards (Lyle 1994, 54). These culminated in the sack of Canterbury in 1011, the killing of its archbishop, and the capture and probable ransom of Abbot Ælfmær of St Augustine's. Canterbury Cathedral was also sacked, and although the St Augustine's abbey is not mentioned it may well have been similarly treated (Kelly 1997, 48). Nevertheless, the tower would have made a poor watchtower. Even assuming that it was 20 m tall, little more than two miles of the surrounding Roman road network would have been visible. Perhaps more importantly, in view of the Viking threat, only two miles of the navigable River Stour could have been watched. Fordwich, the Abbey's late Anglo-Saxon port, would have been invisible (Tatton-Brown 1984, 21). The Abbey owned higher ground less than a mile to the east which would have been a far more favorable site for a watchtower, notwithstanding the fact that by the 1040s the immediate Viking threat was over.

Assembly-sites

Anglo-Saxon Canterbury formed its own early medieval hundred (Anderson 1939a, 148). In the later middle ages, the city and abbey were part of the lathe of St Augustine, whose assembly-site was at St Augustine's Abbey (Wallenberg 1934, 491). This is also likely to have been the location of the early medieval assembly-site: the lathe of St Augustine included the Domesday lathe of Borowart (*burh-ware-lathe*), 'The lathe of the men of the city [of Canterbury]' (Jolliffe 1929, 612), which presumably assembled adjacent to the city from which it took its name. The meeting-place of Westgate hundred, at the west gate of the city (Wallenberg 1934, 491), would also have been intervisible with the tower

Beacon sites

There are no known early beacon-sites in the vicinity of Canterbury.

Fortifications

There is little indication that the tower was positioned to watch known Anglo-Saxon fortifications.

Estates

The tower's viewshed does not encompass the bulk of the Abbey's estates to the east. The Abbey had made important gains in the 1030s (Williams 1997b, 57), yet the newly-constructed tower did not act as a statement of ownership over these new estates.

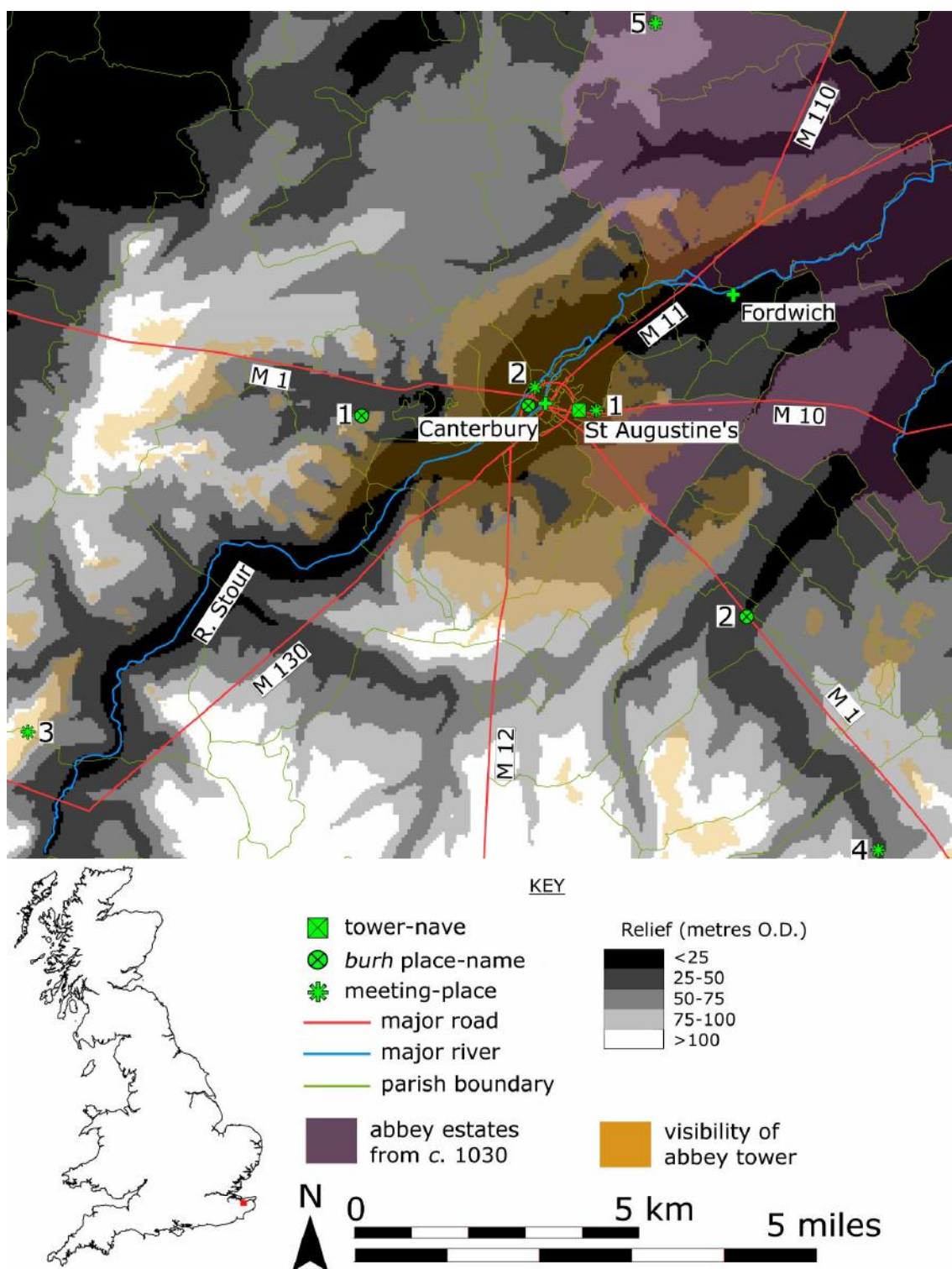


Fig. I.7.4 – The landscape context of St Augustine's abbey.

Key to fig. I.7.4

Assembly-sites

1. Domesday lathe of Borowart presumably assembled at St Augustine's Abbey
2. Westgate hundred met at the west gate of the city (Wallenberg 1934, 491).
3. Felborough hundred met at Felborough Wood (Anderson 1939a, 127-8).
4. Kinghamford hundred met at a ford over the Nail Bourne, near Barham (Anderson 1939a, 146-7).
5. Bleangate hundred met at Bleangate, southwest of Herne Common (Anderson 1939a, 149).

Fortifications

1. Bigsbury Camp (*Beggebery* 1226) in Harbledown (Wallenberg 1934, 499).
2. Blackmansbury (*Blakemannesbyrie* 1253-4) in Bridge (Wallenberg 1934, 542).

Conclusion

St Mary's tower was constructed *c.* 1047 to the southwest of the abbey church. A massive vaulted structure of stone of undoubted height, it stood in the abbey cemetery and appears to have been used as a high-status mortuary chapel. It would have made a poor watchtower and was not widely visible in the landscape. It was partially demolished in the late 11th century.

Appendix I.8: All Saints', Earls Barton, Northamptonshire

Introduction

Earls Barton (fig. I.8.1) is amongst the first tower-nave churches to have been recognised (Micklethwaite 1896, 335). Extended descriptions occur in Baldwin Brown (1925), Salzman (1937, 116-122), Fisher (1962, 214-19), Taylor and Taylor (1965, 222-226), Baker (1988) and Audouy *et al.* (1995). Its interpretation as a possible thegnly tower by David Parsons (in Audouy *et al.* 1995) forms the basis for the wider study of tower-naves attempted here. The only recorded excavation of the site was in 1979, when two trenches were opened in the southeast corner of the aisle, revealing the stone plinth upon which the tower stands (Audouy 1981). An earthwork survey of the area around the church has also been undertaken (Welsh 2001a & 2001b). A campaign of excavation intended for 1969 with the aim of investigating the site as a possible pre-Conquest private *burh* (Davison 1967, 210) seems never to have occurred.



Fig. I.8.1 – All Saints' church, from the south.

Description

All Saints' has been thoroughly described in the works mentioned above, and its visible fabric surveyed (Audouy *et al.* 1995): only a summary is given here.

The plan of the church (fig. I.8.2)

The tower is approximately 7.30 m square at its base with walls 1.20 m thick, diminishing to a thickness of 0.80 m at the top of the tower. Its northeast and southeast quoins are abutted by the walls of the later nave, showing that the church was originally a tower-nave. Although the presence of an eastern chancel was suggested by Micklethwaite (1896, 335), there is no positive evidence for this in the surviving fabric since the tower-arch has been completely rebuilt and a roof-line in the east elevation visible above the present nave is clearly a later insertion. The tower was therefore probably entirely free-standing when first built.



Fig. I.8.2 – Plan of All Saint's church (Audouy *et al.* 1995, 75).

The external elevations of the tower (fig. I.8.3)

The tower is one of the finest survivals of Anglo-Saxon architecture on account of its elaborate pilaster-strip decoration, which finds closest parallel with the tower-nave at Barton-upon-Humber (Lincolnshire). Its Anglo-Saxon fabric is complete to a height of 19.0 m, where it is truncated by later work. It is divided by string-courses into four stages, each of which is decorated by increasingly elaborate stripwork which survives relatively intact, excepting where the tower is abutted by the present nave. The panels in

between seem always to have been rendered; the masonry beneath is of small-to-medium coursed limestone rubble which continues through the thickness of the wall.

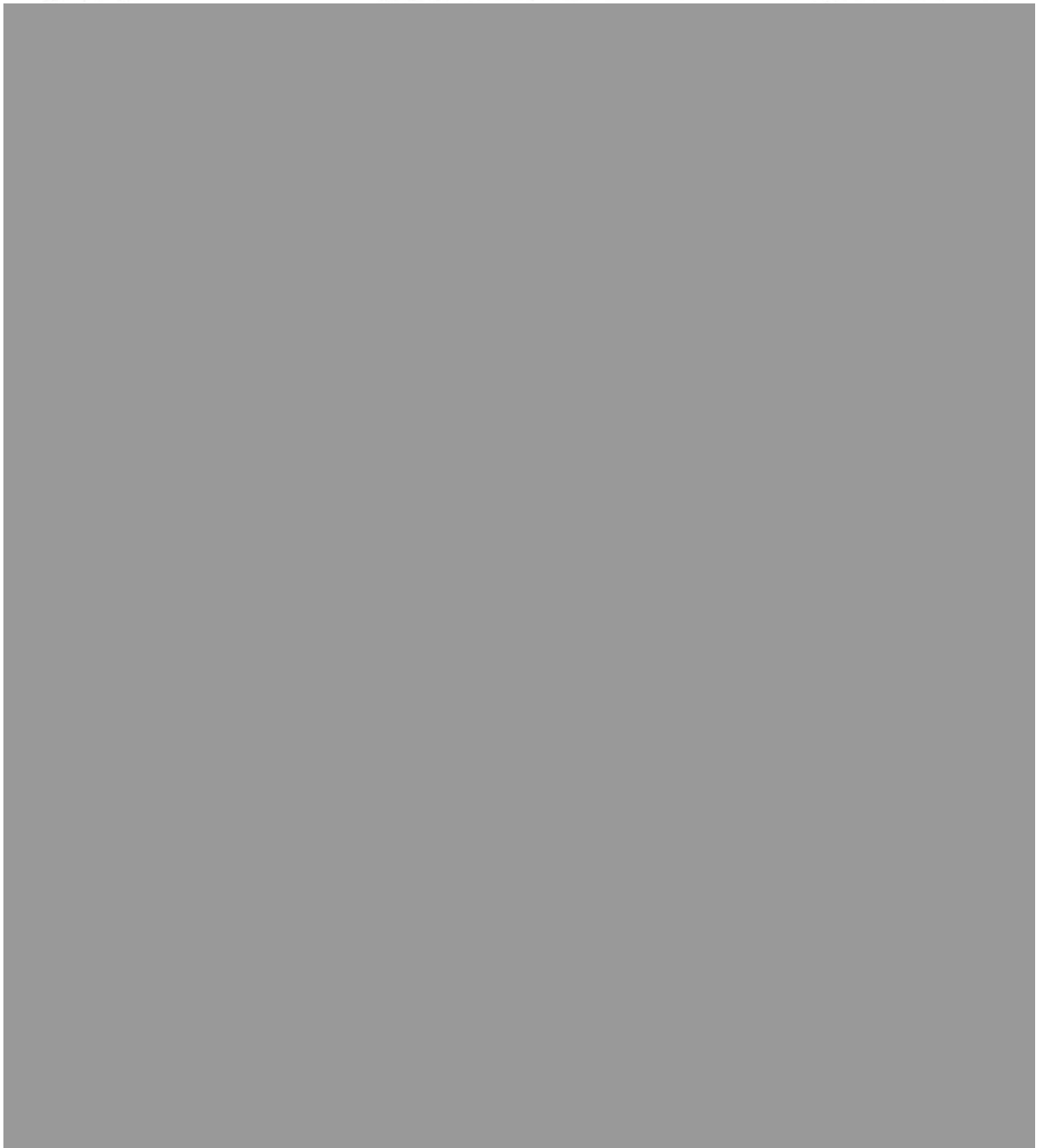


Fig. I.8.3 – The south and east elevations of All Saint's church (Audouy *et al.* 1995, 78).

The tower is accessed at ground level through a monumental round-headed western doorway, and at first-floor level through a simple round-headed doorway in the south elevation. The tower-space was lit by two-light double-splayed windows in its south and west elevations, each light of which is decorated with a cross. An adjacent roundel in the shape of a cross is also set into the south elevation, all of which suggest a religious function for the ground floor of the tower. The first-floor chamber is mainly lit by a series of triangular-headed windows; the upper chamber by an elaborate arcade of

turned balusters, possible belfry-openings, in each of its four walls. It was accessed via an above-ground doorway in the south wall.

Building sequence and date

The surviving Saxon work is thought to be of a single phase of construction, dated by Audouy *et al.* (1995, 90) to the mid-10th century or earlier on the supposition that the church was a hundredal minster, and that the hundredal system was established at this time. The church is not thought here to have been a minster (see below); additionally, recent research into the formation of the hundredal system suggests its origins centuries before it was documented in the 10th century (Reynolds 2009a, 205). We must therefore rely on architectural evidence, which is indicative of a date towards the middle of the 11th century (discussed by Fernie 1983, 143-4). This is corroborated by the recent dating of the comparable tower-nave at Barton-upon-Humber [3] to the first half of the 11th century (Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 354-5).

A nave with a steeply-pitched roof and an above-ground opening into the tower's first floor chamber was added in the 12th century. Also of this date is the chancel, which is elaborated with continuous blind arcading, decorated with chevrons, reminiscent of medieval canons' stalls.

Interpretation

The tower in context

The earlier cemetery

The tower-nave and earthwork were probably preceded a late Anglo-Saxon cemetery, leading to the suggestion that there was an earlier church on the site (Audouy 1981). However, it is now thought that cemeteries lacking chapels were not uncommon following the Conversion, and were used into the late Anglo-Saxon period (Blair 2005, 238, 376). There is also good evidence for the adoption of local cemeteries by chapels, including at the tower-nave of Barton-upon-Humber [3] (Reynolds and Lucy 2002, 20). The site may therefore correspond to Blair's (2005, 374-83) model of the development by the Church of pre-existing sacred sites, including cemeteries, up to the 10th century.

One context for the construction of the tower-nave is suggested by the excavated lordly estate-chapel at Raunds. There, a tiny single-celled chapel of *c.* 900 gained a bellcote in the mid-10th century, which coincided with the institution of a cemetery. The use of bells in Anglo-Saxon funerary liturgy is well-attested, so the bellcote has been seen a symbol of the enhanced status of both the chapel and its lord that resulted from

the new burial rights (Parsons 1996a). The tower at Earls Barton may therefore have been erected to mark, or possibly formalise, the site's use as a burial-ground, and may have further served as a focus for burial liturgy. However, in the absence of larger-scale excavations to provide a more precise chronology this must remain speculation.

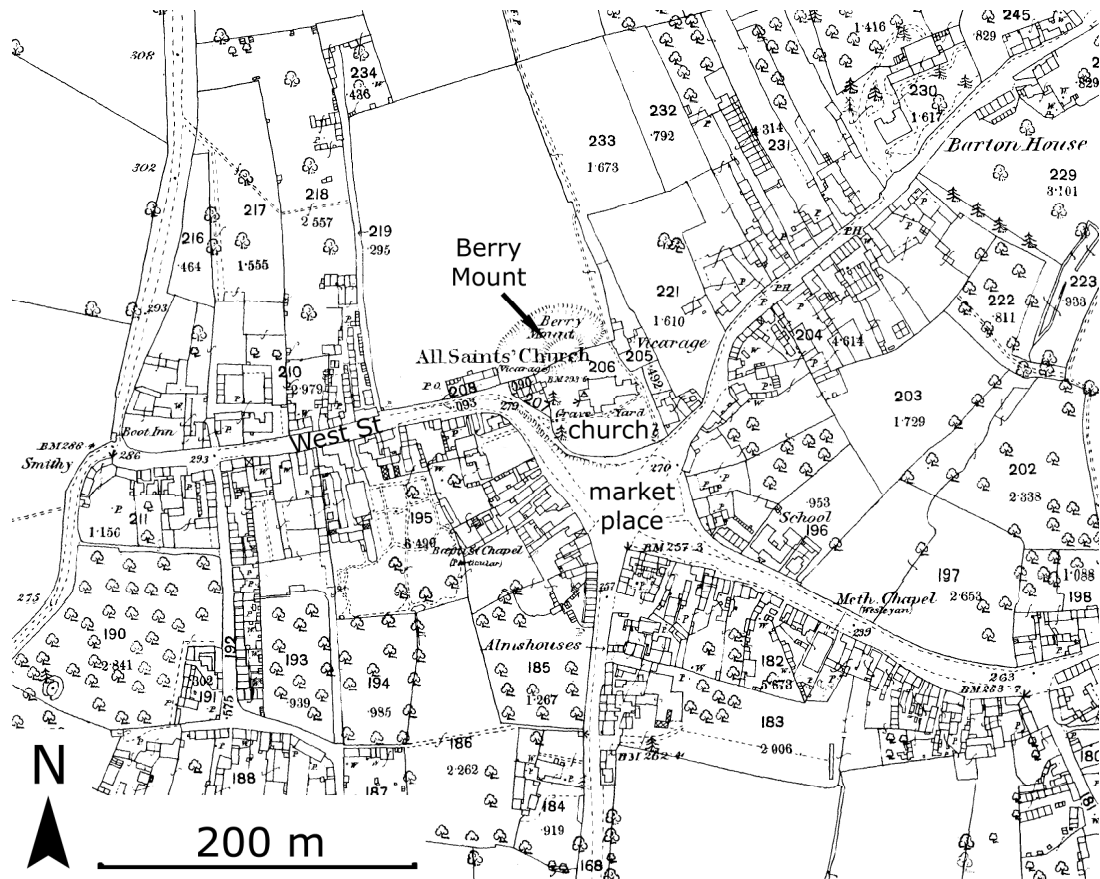


Fig. I.8.4 – First edition OS map (1880s) of Earls Barton

The Berry Mount earthwork

The tower stands in the centre of the nucleated settlement of Earls Barton on a spur of high ground. It is on the north side of the market place, where the settlement's four roads converge (fig. I.8.4). Immediately adjacent on the north side is Berry Mount, an ovoid mound with a flat top, 2.0 m in height, bounded to the north by a wide curving ditch up to 4.0 m deep. The original form and purpose of this feature, which remains unexcavated, has attracted debate. Addy (1913, 104-6) saw the ditch as the surviving half of a truncated ovoid enclosure with a central motte. This is the preferred interpretation of David Parsons, who sees it as a pre-Norman ringwork (Audouy *et al.* 1995, 87). The lack of alignment between the mound and ditch, however, may indicate that they are not contemporary, presenting the possibility that the ditch alone formed a ringwork or simply protected the neck of the spur upon which the tower stands, and that the mound was either a Norman motte or of prehistoric origin (Clark 1878, 119;

Davison 1967, 208; RCHME 1979, 40). The 1979 excavations on the site tentatively suggest that the earthworks pre-dated the tower, precluding a Norman date for the mound, and that both were preceded by a cemetery of possible late Anglo-Saxon date (Audouy 1981).

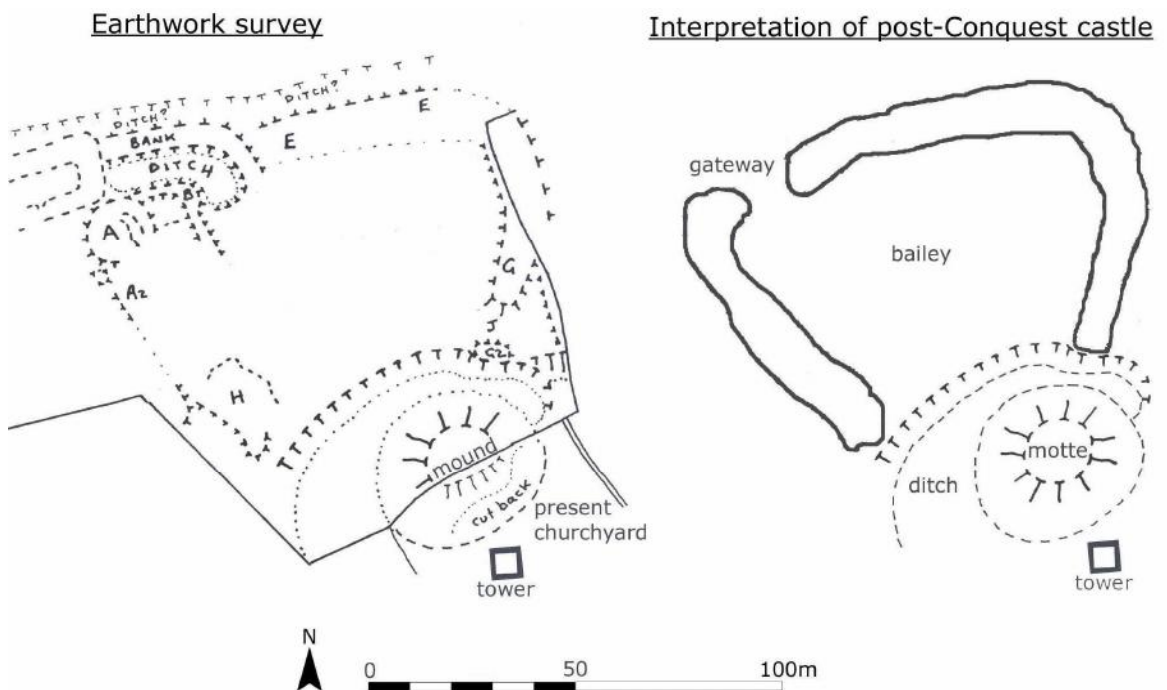


Fig. I.8.5 – Earthwork survey and interpretation of the area around Berry Mount (Welsh 2001a & 2001b).

Detailed survey has recently been undertaken north of the mound and ditch (fig. I.8.5) (Welsh 2001a & 2001b). The mound was interpreted a probable post-Conquest motte, albeit one out of alignment with the ditch that immediately surrounds it. Further earthworks are visible to the north which pre-date an area of ridge and furrow on the site, demonstrating their antiquity. Welsh tentatively interpreted them as remains as a bailey enclosure progressing clockwise on his plan along H, A2, A, B, E, G and G2. The primary entrance seems to have been at A/B, with A potentially representing a circular gate-tower, probably a later modification. The feature C/D probably belongs to a later phase entirely, and may have been associated with the re-use of the gate-building A/B, assuming this survived the removal of the bailey. All this puts the re-use of the site as a motte-and-bailey castle on a reasonable footing, but still does not solve the problem of the form of the apparent pre-Conquest ditch, which would need excavation.

Earls Barton as an estate centre

The name 'Earls Barton' (1086) derives from *bere-tūn*, 'barley farm' or 'demesne farm'; the prefix 'Earls' is first recorded in 1261, probably as a result of the 12th century acquisition of the estate by the Earl of Huntingdon (Gover *et al.* 1933, 137). The *Domesday Book* suggests that it was a late Anglo-Saxon estate centre:

The countess [Judith] herself holds 4 hides in Earls Barton. There is land for 8 ploughs. In demesne are 2 [ploughs], and 3 slaves; and 8 villans and 6 bordars and 11 sokemen have 6 plouhs. There are 3 mills rendering 28s 8d, and 34 acres of meadow. It was and is worth £4. Bondi held it with sake and soke.

(Williams and Martin 2002, 619)

Also belonging to Earls Barton were estates of four hides in each of three neighbouring parishes, Wilby, Great Doddington and Mears Ashby, all of which Bondi also held *TRE*. (Williams and Martin 2002, 619-20). Bondi also held other land scattered around a further six parishes in Northamptonshire *TRE*., including ten hides in Titchmarsh and three in Barnack. Earls Barton would have been the centre of this estate: Bondi held it with sake and soke, it was the most valuable of his holdings, and Wilby, Great Doddington and Mears Ashby were dependent on it.

Soke centres in Northamptonshire, such Earls Barton, would have incorporated a defended lordly residence. As focal places of ecclesiastical, judicial and economic power, their lords were probably royal reeves (Foard 1985, 205-6). The construction of the tower-nave cannot be ascribed to Bondi, but it was built at a late Anglo-Saxon estate centre. The hundred assembly-place, the judicial focus for the region, also lay in the parish. This raises the question as to the location of the late Anglo-Saxon manor-house.

The obvious place for the late Anglo-Saxon manorial *curia* of Earls Barton is at its fortified core, around the tower-nave and Berry Mount (Audouy 1981, 73; Wilson 1976, 443; Blair 2005, 412-4). As mentioned above, this ringwork has been tentatively dated to the late Anglo-Saxon period. There is some place-name evidence for this. Whilst the 'Berry' element of Berry Mount ultimately derives from *burh* (Gover *et al.* 1933, 138), it commonly denoted a court or the chief house of a manor from at least the 12th century (Blount 1674; Addy 1913, 105). The manor house of Earls Barton at Barton House lies northeast (fig. I.8.4), but it is too peripheral to be convincing as part of the early medieval townscape. It may represent one of the three manors known from the town in the early 14th century (Salzman 1937, 116).

It has been suggested that the Earls Barton tower-nave incorporated the functions of chapel, bell-house and *burhgeat* into one status-affording aristocratic structure (Radford 1953, 197; Davison 1967, 208; Audouy *et al* 1995, 87; Reynolds 1999, 9). The tower's architecture supports aspects of this interpretation. Its pilaster stripwork is exceptional, and the highest and most visible parts of the tower are the most elaborate, suggesting that it was an expression of wealth and prestige (Audouy *et al* 1995, 80; Reynolds 1999, 96). The ground stage bears prominent cross motifs, indicating its use as a chapel, but they are not repeated further up, even though the upper levels are the building's most elaborate and decorated part. Instead, the upper rooms had a separate, above-ground entrance, and may therefore have acted as a private chamber or defensible refuge. The tower is unlikely to have acted as a *burhgeat* or fortified gateway, since the entrance to the site would have been from the west, along West Street (fig. I.8.4). However, if the term *burhgeat* is taken as a more general term for a fortified enclosure, the location of the tower on the circuit of the putative ringwork defending the site would fit in with its interpretation as an architectural elaboration of these defences.

A motte-and-bailey castle may have been built on the site in the Norman period. It seems to have had a motte, and although its putative bailey is undated it is demonstrably early, being cut by ridge-and-furrow. It exhibits evidence for several phases of development, suggesting that it was a relatively long-standing feature. If this was the case, it represents striking continuity of the site's use as a seigniorial centre.

A minster church at Earls Barton?

It has been suggested that the church was an Anglo-Saxon minster (Audouy *et al.* 1995, 90). The parish of Earls Barton was at the centre the hundred of Hamfordshoe. The church's 12th century chancel is decorated with continuous blind arcading decorated with chevrons, reminiscent of medieval canons' stalls, paralleled in Northamptonshire only at the minster in King's Sutton. Nevertheless, the status of the site may simply have changed as the old tower-nave was incorporated into a new church. There was also a fashion in the late 11th century for founding collegiate churches at aristocratic residences in England and Normandy (Durham *et al.* 2003, 163), which may explain the architectural peculiarity of the chancel.

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.8.6)*Communication routes*

The tower stands in the centre of its parish high up on the north side of the Nene Valley six miles east of Northampton. Its lofty position was such that it was known locally as 'Barton-on-the-Hill' (Salzman 1937, 116). Even assuming it was little higher than the 19 m of original work that survive, it would have had views of at least five miles in every direction except the northwest. This would have included a large stretch of the River Nene itself, which was navigable as far as Northampton (Blair 2007, 18). The Bedford to Peterborough road, incorporating the M 570 and the M 170a, ran four miles east of Earls Barton. It crossed a ridgeway which may preserve an ancient route. These roads would have been visible from the tower.

Assembly-sites

The tower would have been clearly visible from its hundredal assembly-place, which met only a mile to the northwest, on the northern boundary of its parish, adjacent to the road leading north from the village.

Beacon sites

The tower commands a clear view of the beacon-site at Warrington, six miles to the southeast, which communicates to the south with Paulerspury beacon on Watling Street and north *via* a chain of sites into Leicestershire, where Cossington beacon stood on the Fosse Way.

Fortifications

There is little evidence for fortifications in the locality of Earls Barton.

Estates

The tower was visible from most of the territory belonging to its lord in 1066, and so could have acted as an estate-marker. However, it was not placed on the highest ground in its parish, so visibility was not the overriding concern in its location.

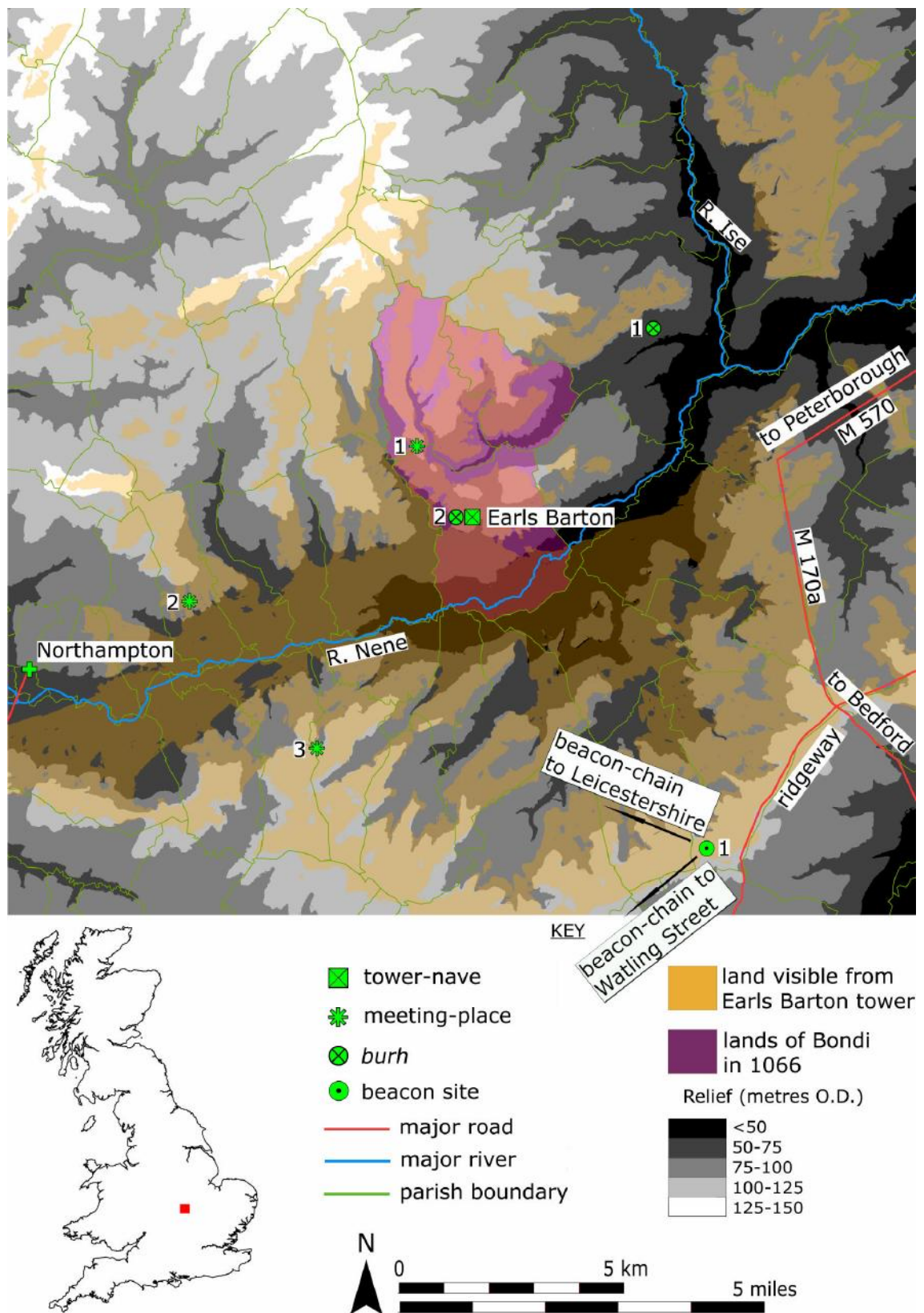


Fig. I.8.6 – The landscape context of Earls Barton

Key to fig. I.8.6

Burhs

1. Wellingborough (*Wendlesberie* 1086) (Gover *et al.* 1933, 138).
2. 'Berry Mount', as well as the adjacent 'Berry Field' both derive from *burh* (Gover *et al.* 1933, 138).

Beacons

1. Warrington (*Wardintone* 1175) (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 16).

Meeting-places

1. Hamfordshoe hundred met at Round Hill, on the boundary of Earls Barton parish (Gover *et al.* 1933, 136-7).
2. Spellhoe hundred met in Weston Favell (Gover *et al.* 1933, 132)
3. Wymersley hundred met in Little Houghton (Gover *et al.* 1933, 140).

Conclusion

As well as originating the study of the social context of tower-naves, the early-mid 11th century example at Earls Barton acts as a ‘type-site’ against which other tower-naves can be measured. The structural evidence is unequivocal about its previously free-standing form, it is a lavishly built and impressive structure, and it stands within a seemingly early medieval earthwork with place-name evidence suggestive of a manorial *burh*. The building itself appears to have acted both as a chapel and a belfry, which would fit in with the requirements for lordly status of the *Promotion Law*. The Domesday book shows that Earls Barton was at the centre of the estate of a lord with unusual legal power, who would presumably have exercised his power over the adjacent meeting-place with the architectural symbol of his lordship in clear sight. This meeting-place would in all probability also have been used to muster the *fyrð*, with the tower as a focal point for the troops. A further strategic dimension for the tower is its utility as a watchtower: although it was not ideally-placed in this respect, its viewshed encompasses a navigable river, a major route and a beacon that could transmit warnings for an hundred miles at least, including to and from two arterial Roman roads. This function may have continued after the Conquest in the form of a possible motte-and-bailey castle.

Appendix I.9: SS Simon and Jude, East Dean, East Sussex

Introduction

The church of St Simon and St Jude (fig. I.9.1) lies on the South Downs a short distance from the tower-nave at Jevington [17], which it closely resembles. It is not included in any of the general books on Anglo-Saxon architecture and was not described until Fisher (1970, 101-3). The foundations of an apse at the east end of the tower were uncovered in the late nineteenth century, later re-excavated in 1979 (Freke 1982).



Fig. I.9.1 – General view of the church, from the northwest

Description

The plan of the church (fig. I.9.2)

The church consists of a nave with a south porch and a weeping chancel; the tower stands on the north side of the nave adjacent to the chancel-arch. The tower is 5.55 m north/south by 5.50 m east/west with wall thicknesses of 1.00 m (north), 0.85 m (east), 0.90 m (south) and 0.95 m (west). Its south wall abuts the north wall of the nave, with a combined thickness of 1.55 m. It is presently accessed from the west and from the nave by 19th century doorways; a tower-arch replaced by a doorway, now blocked, formerly communicated the tower with the nave. To the east of the tower in 1982 were excavated the foundations of a round apse, 1.85 m east/west by 3.60 m north/south and 0.60 m wide, constructed from knapped flint with a single Greensand block. It was linked to the tower by an arch, now blocked (Freke 1982).

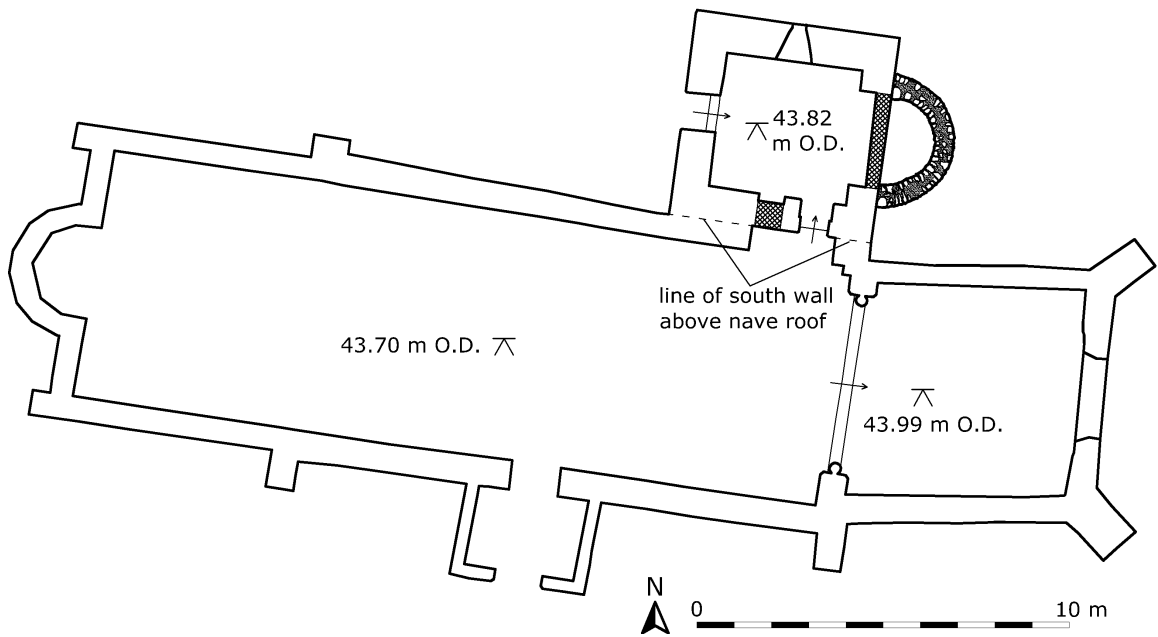


Fig. I.9.2 – Plan of the church

The external elevations of the tower

The walls of the tower are almost entirely of flint rubble, with irregular quoins of dressed sandstone, including a number of modern replacements. The tower is divided into three unequal stages by two sandstone string-courses, chamfered on their upper edges, but there is nothing to suggest that the tower is not of a single phase of construction. It is uncertain whether it survives to its original height.

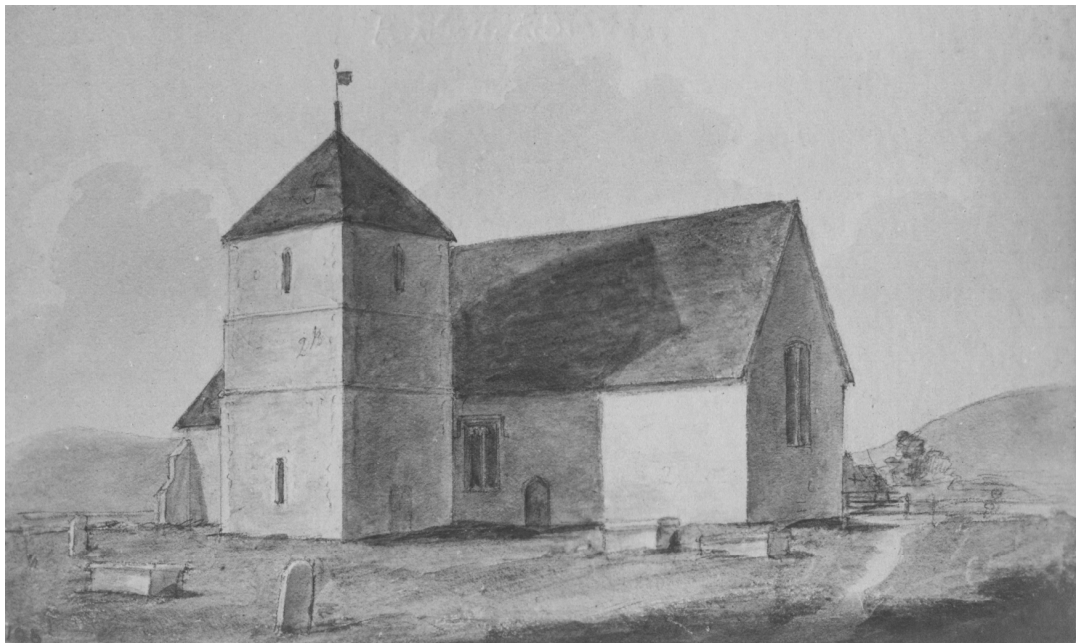


Fig. I.9.3 – View of the church from the northwest, dated 1804 (Sharpe Collection no. 106, Sussex Archaeological Society).

North elevation (figs I.9.4 & I.9.5)

The north elevation measures 9.45 m from ground level to the top of its surviving masonry. The first stage, including its string-course, is 4.65 m high, rising to 4.75 m on the east side of the elevation. It is pierced by a central window 1.50 m from ground level, 0.35 m wide and up to 1.15 m tall. It has irregular dressed sandstone jambs, a flint sill, and its round head is cut from two sandstone blocks. Its head and jambs are chamfered. It is visible on an 1804 watercolour of the tower (fig. I.9.3). There is no sign of any other blocked openings, including a counterpart of the doorway in the south wall, but the flint construction of the tower makes this uncertain.



Fig. I.9.4 – North elevation of the tower.

NORTH ELEVATION

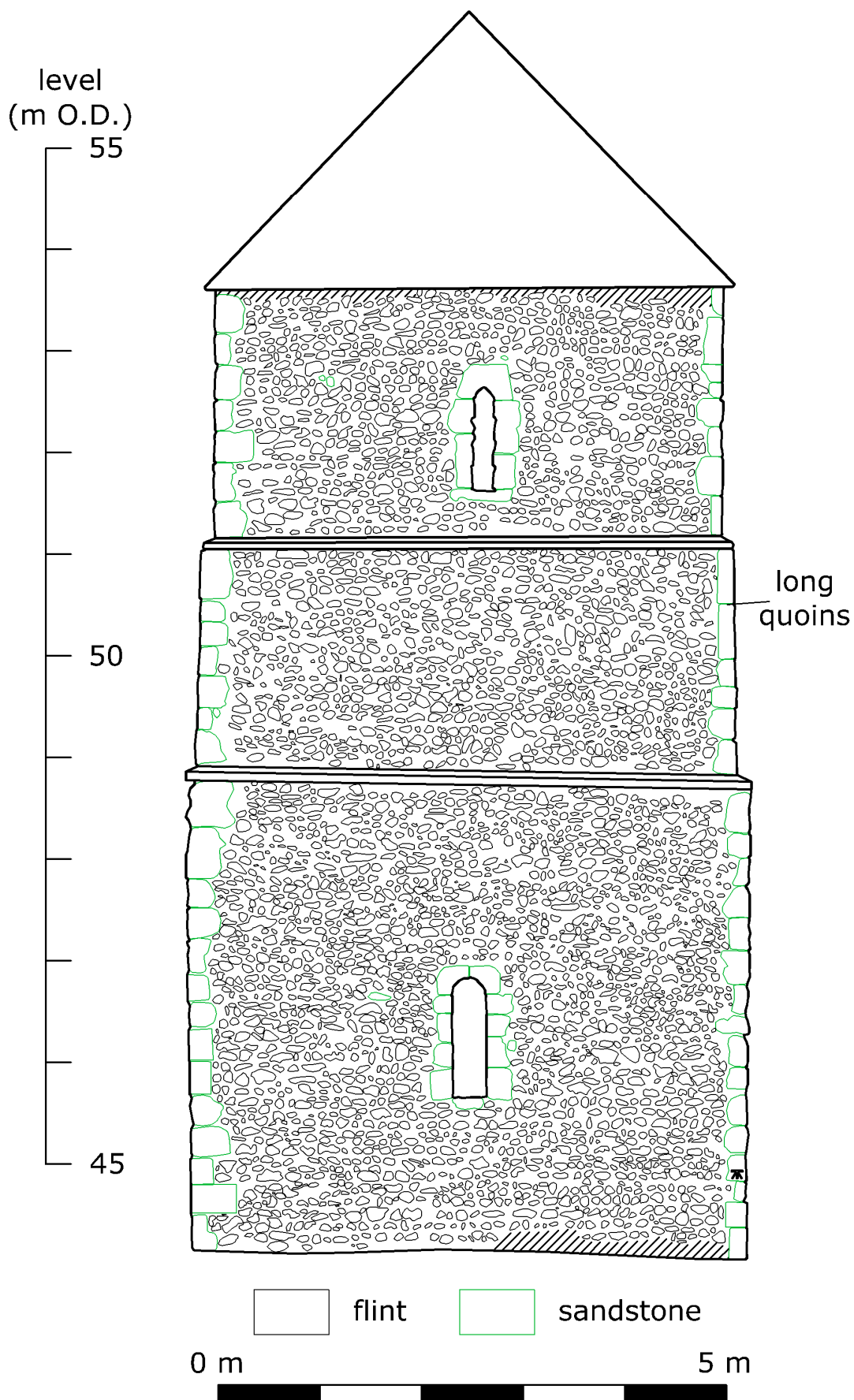


Fig. I.9.5 – Drawing of the north elevation of the tower.

The second stage is 2.25 m tall and extends to a level of 7.00 m. It is blank, but interesting in that the upper two of its western quoins are particularly long and narrow, at 0.55 m by 0.15 m, as if they have been re-used from Anglo-Saxon long-and-short work. The third stage is 2.40 m to eaves level; its only visible feature is a second window 0.20 m wide by up to 1.00 m, that is smaller than the one at ground level. It has irregular dressed sandstone jambs and head, but of a paler geology than the lower window, and it differs in having a sandstone sill and a slightly pointed head cut from a single block of stone. It is also markedly off-centre from the centre of the elevation, all of which may suggest that it is a later insertion, possibly connected to the conversion of the tower's upper chamber into a belfry. It is visible on an 1804 watercolour of the tower (fig. I.9.3).

East elevation (figs I.9.6 & I.9.7)

The upper half of the east elevation is obscured by vegetation, but the first and most of the second stage were visible for survey. The first stage is 4.65 m tall and, at 5.85 m across, making it wider than the original width of the tower. This part of the tower is supported by a modern buttress, indicating that its southeast corner has been rebuilt. This may be due structural problems associated with the addition of the later nave to the south wall of the tower (see discussion below). The tower's quoins have been removed at ground floor level: they are present on the second stage. Also visible is the blocked archway to the tower's former apse, indicated by a relative sparsity of flint and an increase of sandstone blocks.

The second stage has a small round-headed window 0.15 m wide and up to 0.95 m tall with its sill formed from the string-course at the bottom of this stage. It has a chamfered opening, large roughly-dressed sandstone jambs and a head formed from a single block of stone. It most resembles the window in a comparable position on the west elevation, aside from its absence of a sill. The third stage also seems to have had a small, central round-headed window, but it was not visible for proper description.



Fig. I.9.6 – The external east elevation of the tower

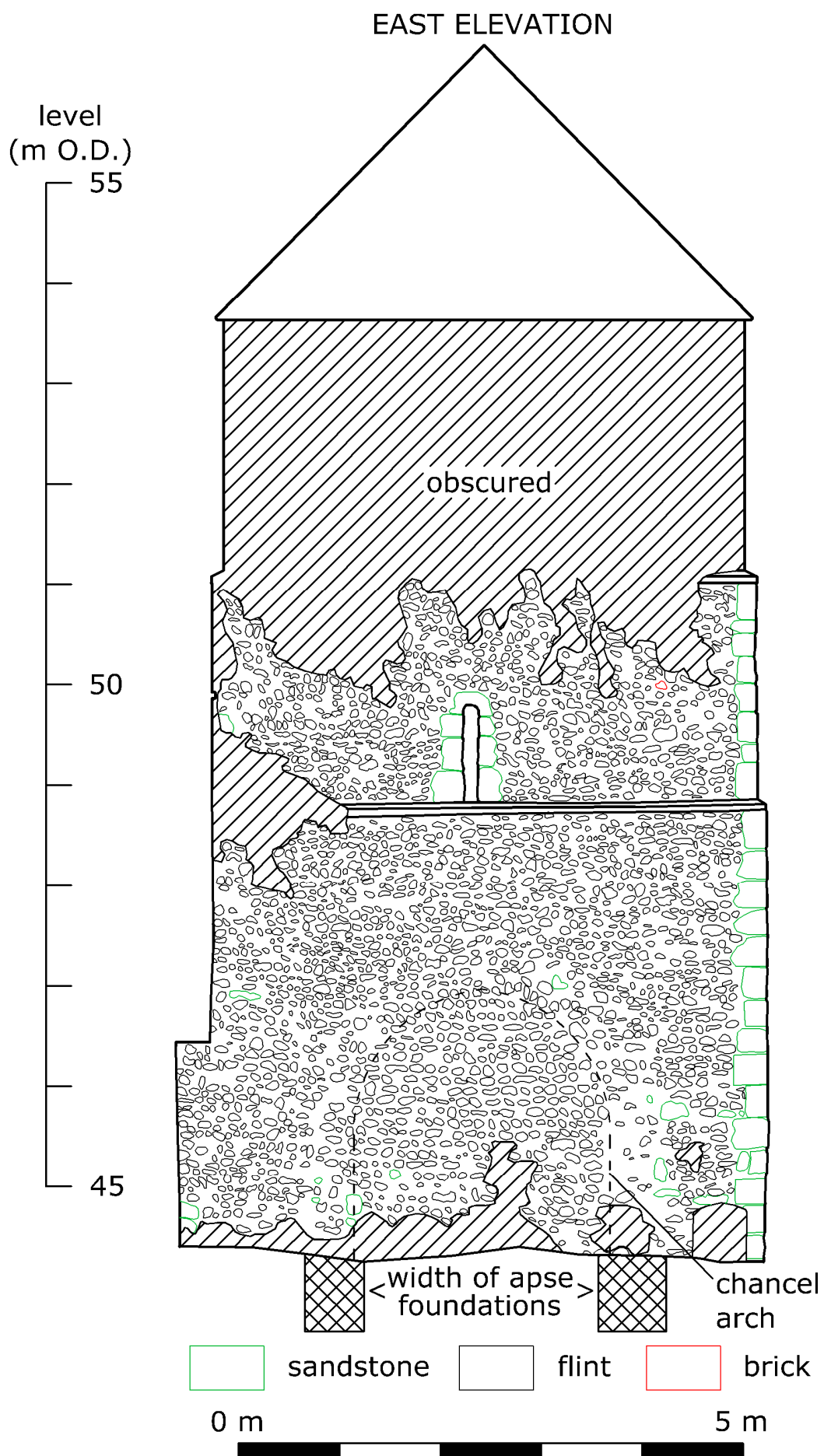


Fig. I.9.7 – Drawing of the east elevation

South elevation (figs I.9.8 & I.9.9)

The bottom stage of the south elevation is abutted by the north wall of the present nave. It is obscured by plaster, but the jambs and voussoirs of a confusing arrangement of openings can be seen. The tower wall is visible through a large relieving arch 2.60 m wide by up to 3.85 m tall, with recumbent dressed stone voussoirs, a large dressed impost-stone and dressed jambs. It truncates the eastern half of a round-headed archway with recumbent dressed voussoirs, a crude chamfered impost and long megalithic jamb stones. It is presently up to 2.90 m tall: if its arc is projected round, it would have been *c.* 2.35 m wide and up to 3.05 m tall. On the eastern side, a 19th century doorway gives access to the tower-space. The upper stages of the elevation are wholly obscured by the present nave roof.



Fig. I.9.8 – The south wall of the tower, viewed from inside the present nave. The north wall of the nave is built up against the tower (see plan, fig. I.9.2).

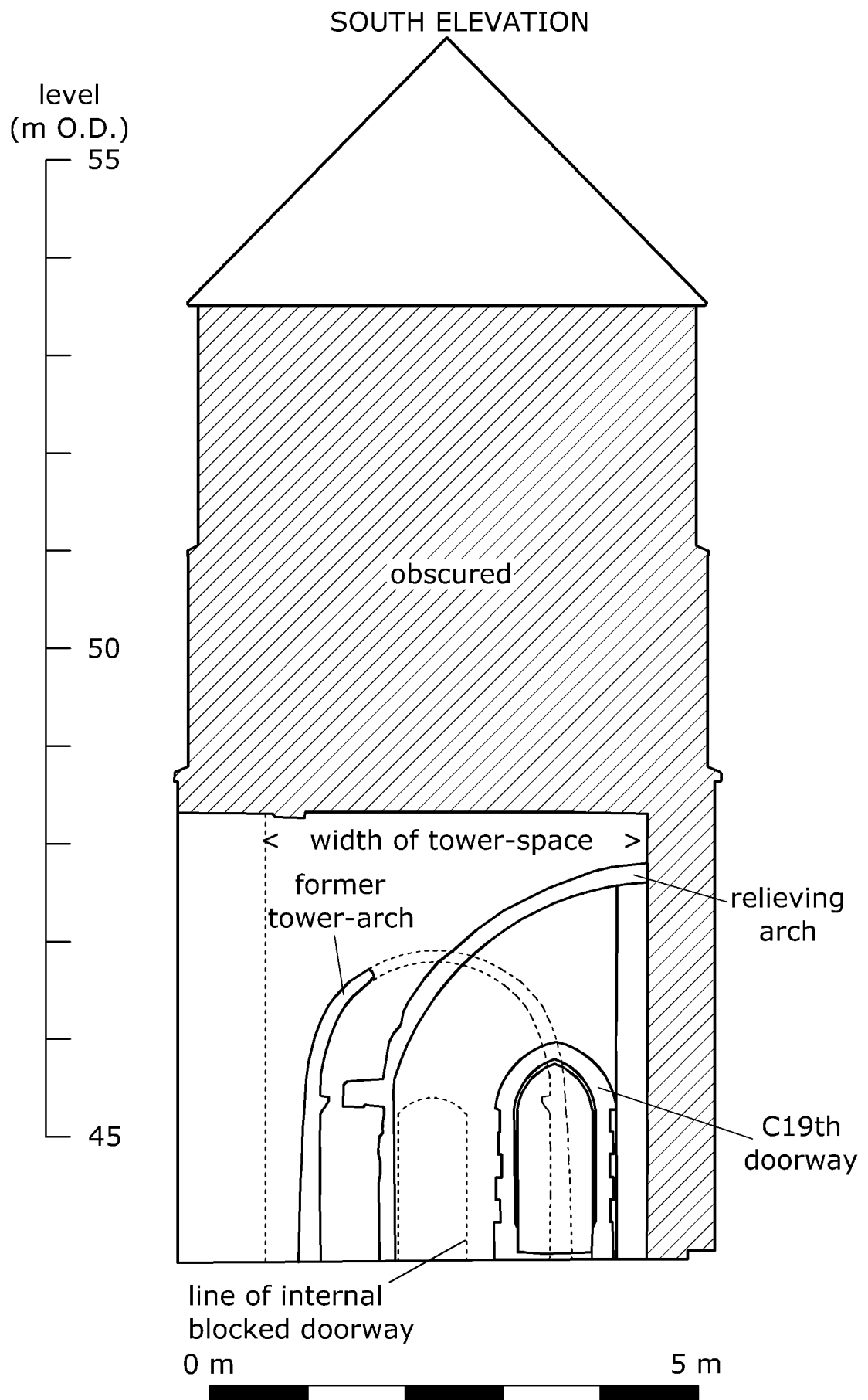


Fig. I.9.9 – Drawing of the south elevation of the tower

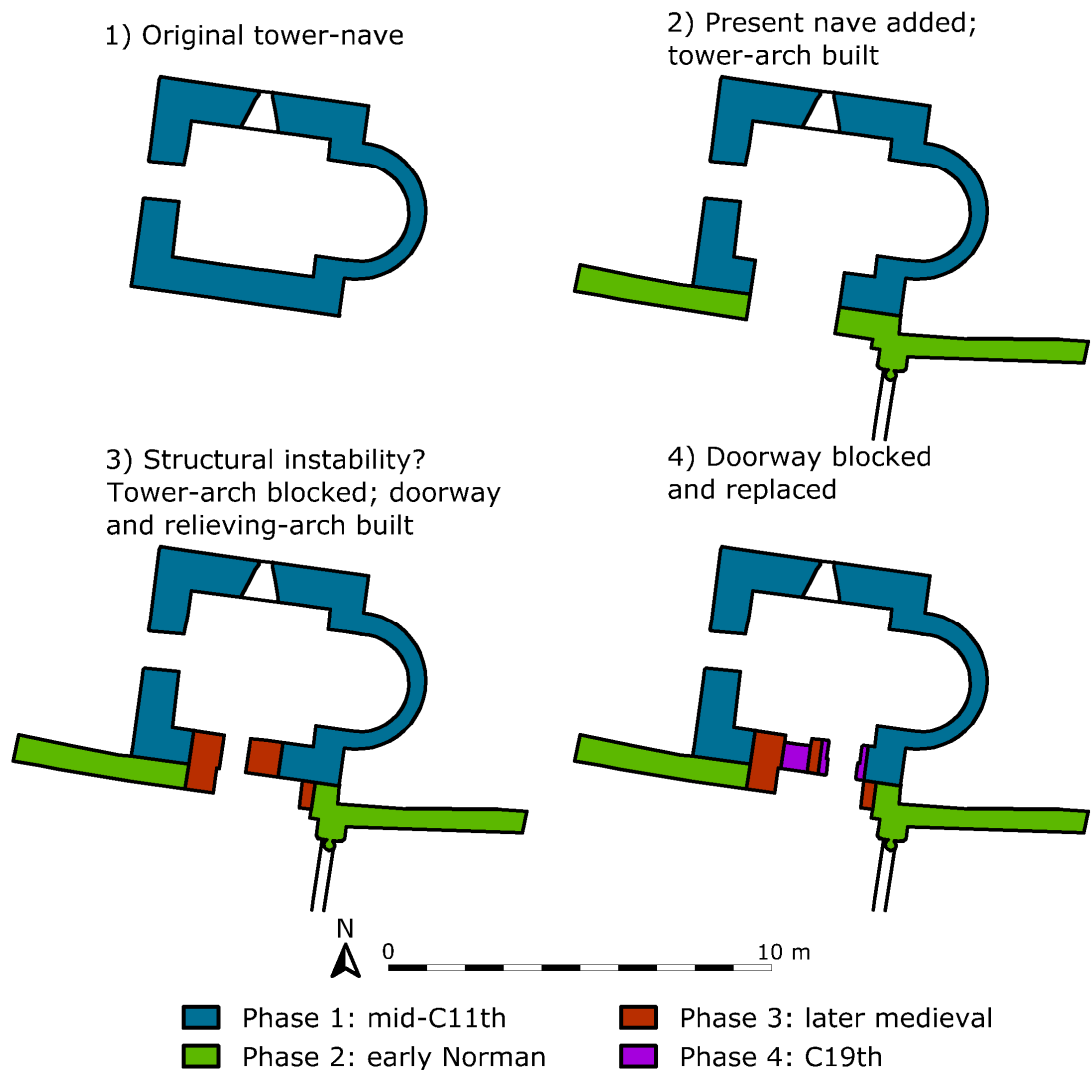
DEVELOPMENT OF TOWER

Fig. I.9.10 – Suggested development of the south elevation of the tower.

This arrangement can be interpreted as follows (fig. I.9.10):

1. The construction of the tower-nave.
2. A new church was built to the south of the tower-nave, and a tower-arch added to link them.
3. The tower-arch was replaced by a doorway, now blocked, presently visible inside the tower-space (fig. I.9.14). Its three-centre arched head combined with its rough megalithic jambs implies it is of late medieval date, but was constructed re-using stones from the old tower-arch. What appears to be a relieving arch may also date to this period. This work may have been in response to a structural failure in this part of the tower,.
4. In the 19th century, it was blocked and replaced by a second doorway immediately to the east, possibly due to a change in floor level within the tower.

West elevation (figs I.9.11 & I.9.12)

The tower's west elevation measures is 9.40 m from present ground level to the top of its surviving masonry. The first stage, including the string-course, is 4.70 m high. Notable is the presence of seven sandstone quoins on the south side of this part of the elevation, indicating that the tower was originally free-standing. Four of these quoins appear to have been disturbed and re-set, either when the present nave was constructed, or during episode of the structural weakness suggested during discussion of the tower's south elevation (above). The flintwork on the southern third of the lower stage of this elevation is ragged, supporting the impression that it has been rebuilt. The elevation has a central doorway 0.95 m wide and up to 1.90 m tall, constructed of 19th century ashlar. It is surrounded by disturbed flintwork and is clearly a insertion: the original is visible in the 1804 watercolour of the tower (fig. I.9.3).

The second stage is 2.25 m tall and extends 6.95 m above ground level. On its north side, the upper pair of quoins are distinctively long and narrow, resembling Anglo-Saxon work. It has a central chamfered window 4.85 m above ground level, 0.20 m wide and up to 0.85 m tall, which has a round head cut from a single stone, irregular dressed sandstone quoins, and a dressed sandstone sill. It resembles the window in a comparable position on the east elevation, but it is not visible in the 1804 watercolour (fig. I.9.3), implying that it is a Victorian insertion. The third stage measures 2.40 m to eaves level and has a round-headed chamfered window 0.25 m wide by up to 1.05 m tall. It was present in 1804 (fig. I.9.3).

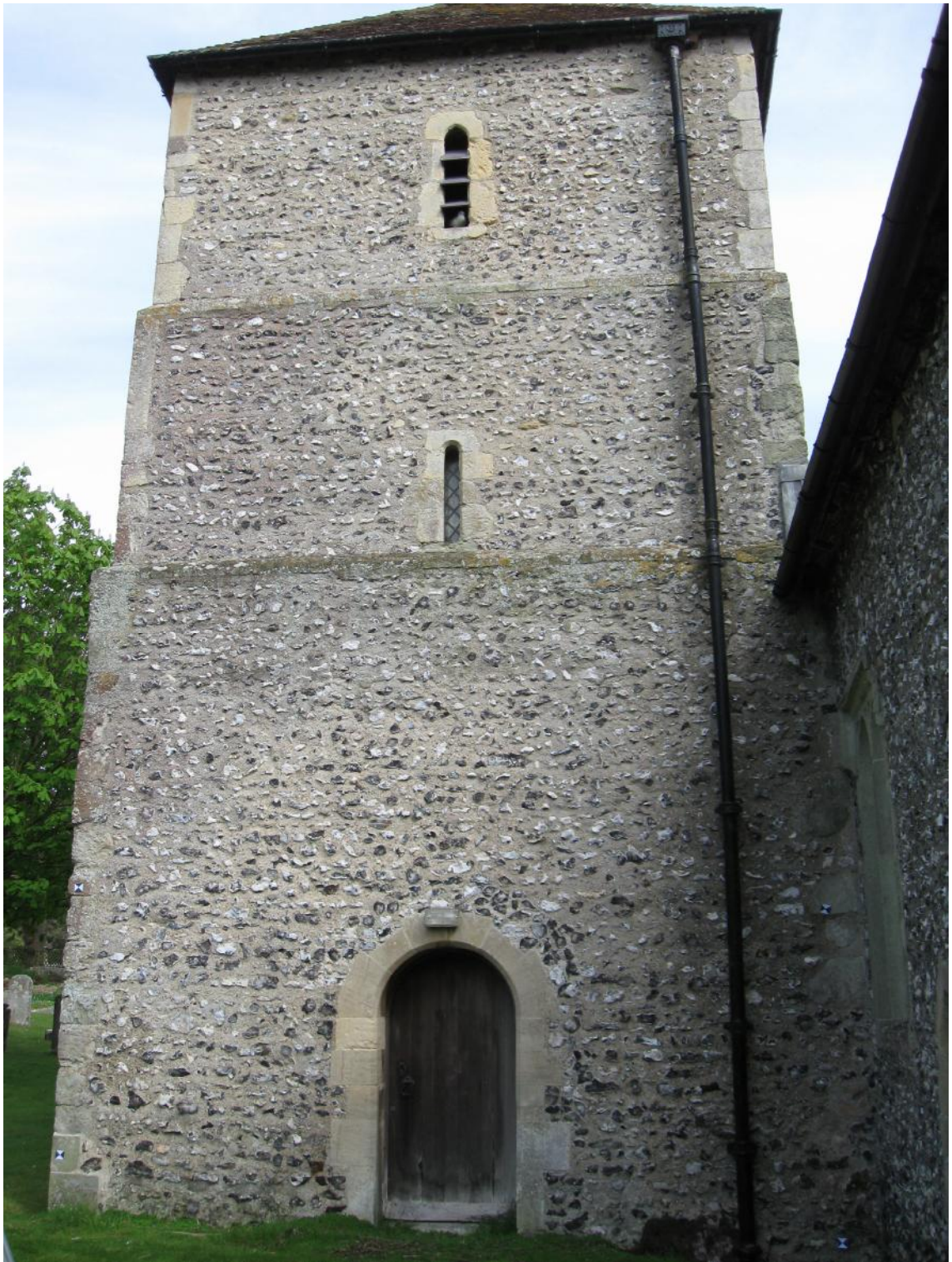


Fig. I.9.11 – The west external elevation of the tower

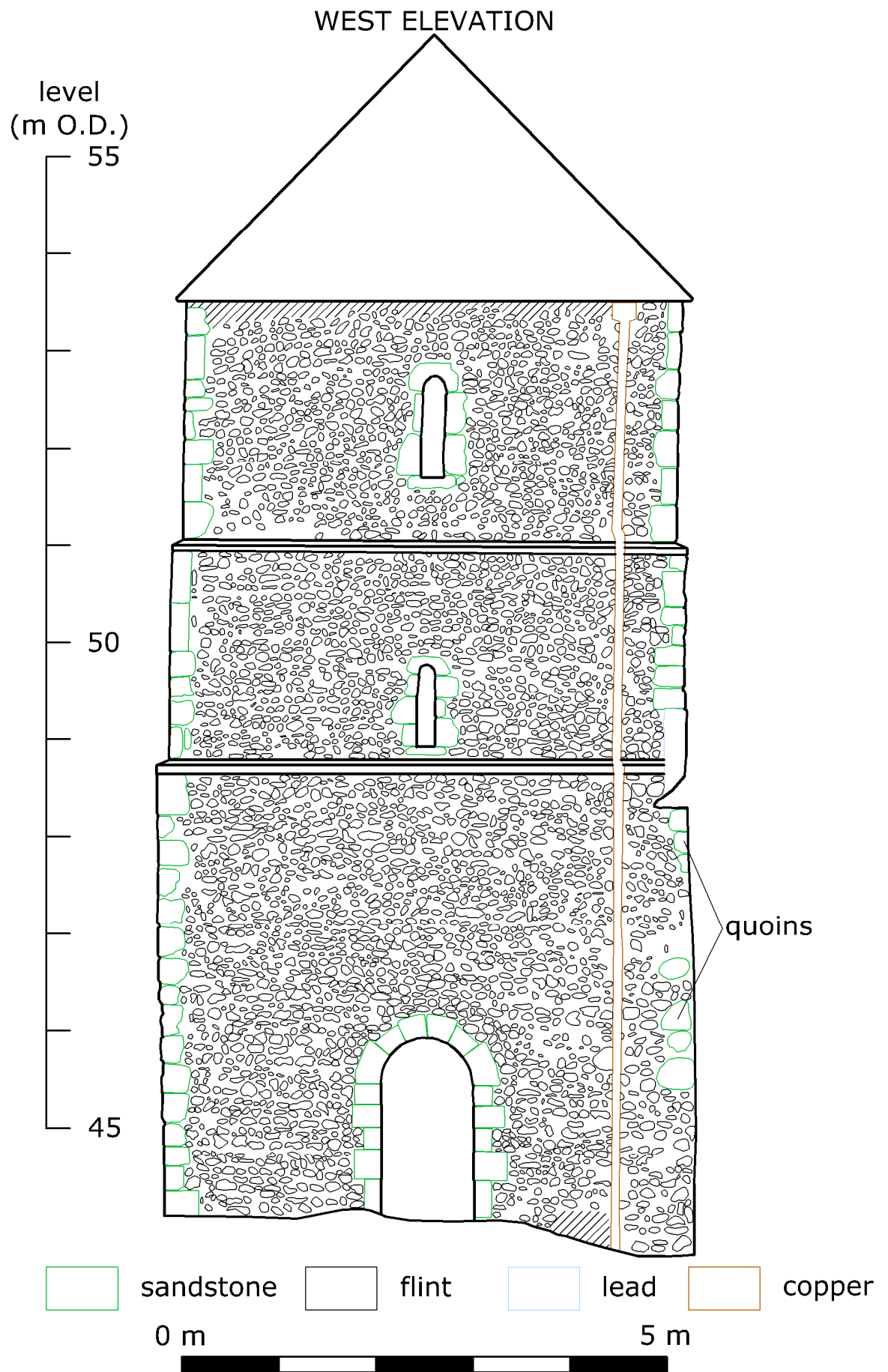


Fig. I.9.12 – Drawing of the west elevation of the tower

The internal elevations of the tower*Ground floor level*

The ground floor chamber of the tower is presently whitewashed and few features are visible. In the north elevation is the single splay of the round-headed window at this level, which has dressed stone jambs and a sloping sill.

In the east wall is the former tower-arch to the tower's apse, now blocked. It is presently largely obscured (fig. I.9.13), but is described by Fisher (1970, 103) as being of a single order of seventeen voussoirs which are not through-stones. The jambs are each of eight similarly-sized stones with diagonal tooling. The imposts are 100 mm across and are chamfered on their lower edge. It is 2.55 m wide and up to 3.15 m high with jambs 1.65 m tall to impost level.



Fig. I.9.13 – Internal elevation of the tower-nave's chancel-arch, partially obscured.

In the south wall are a pair of doorways: the Victorian entrance to the tower from the main body of the church, and a blocked central doorway only 0.70m wide and up to 1.60m high. It has megalithic jambs resembling long-and-short quoins of similar type to the truncated former tower-arch of the tower's south external elevation. It also has three-centred arched head formed from two large stones; no other Anglo-Saxon doorway has such a head, suggesting that in its present form it dates from the late medieval period. It may have been inserted at that time partially re-using Anglo-Saxon masonry from the old tower-arch, as discussed above. The doorway's low height implies that the floor level of the tower has risen since it was in use, and indeed on the

tower's external west elevation a drainage ditch shows the tower's fabric extending for at least a further 0.35m below present ground level.



Fig. I.9.14 – The internal south elevation of the tower-space. **Left:** inserted Victorian doorway to present nave. **Right:** earlier blocked doorway, with megalithic jambs and a three-centred head. Note change in floor level.

In the west wall is the tower's external doorway (fig. I.9.15), which has irregular dressed jambs and voussoirs and a round head. Two phases of construction are visible here: its Victorian exterior, and its much earlier, presumably original interior. Internally, it has heterogeneous dressed jamb-stones, several of which resemble long-and-short work, and irregular dressed voussoirs. A variety of diagonal tooling is visible.



Fig. I.9.15 – The tower's western doorway, from within the tower-space. Note the long, megalithic northern jamb stone.

First-floor level

The upper stage of the tower was not accessible for survey.

The rest of the church

The chancel has a round-headed two-light window, now blocked, in its south wall, although it cannot be certain whether this is an original feature due to internal plasterwork (fig. I.9.16). Also visible are a pair of small engaged columns either side of the chancel's present east window, presumably the turned jambs of its predecessor (fig. I.9.16), although again it is unknown whether this is an original feature. The nave contains no early features other than those associated with the south wall of the tower (described above).



Fig. I.9.16 – **Left:** Blocked round-headed windows and doorway in the south wall of the chancel. **Right:** Turned engaged column on the south side of the later chancel window.

Discussion

Building sequence (fig. I.9.10)

Phase 1

As recognised in the two existing studies of (Fisher 1970, 103; Freke 1982), the tower originally consisted of a free-standing tower-nave with a small eastern apse and a western doorway:

1. The south wall of the tower and the north wall of the present nave abut (fig. I.9.2).
2. Quoin stones are visible at the southwest corner of the tower, indicating that it is the earlier structure (fig. I.9.12). Both the tower's southeast and southwest corners appear to have been rebuilt, so not all the quoins survive.
3. There is no evidence for a corresponding south tower, indicating that the present tower was not originally constructed as a transept, its later medieval function.

Phase 2

A conventional nave and chancel were built abutting the south wall of the tower-nave. They communicated via a tower-arch cut through the thickness of both walls, in the manner of Caistor [6]. The tower's disturbed southeast and southwest quoins implies this involved a partial rebuilding of the tower.

Phase 3

The tower may have been converted into a belltower with the addition of openings at the cardinal points of its upper stage. This is uncertain since only the north and west openings at this level are clearly visible. If true, the apparently inserted Gothic window in the tower's north wall dates this to some time after the construction of the Norman nave and chancel.

Phase 4

The tower-arch was replaced by a doorway and an ungainly relieving-arch at some stage in the late medieval period, judging by the three-centred head of the doorway.

Dating

The small round-headed windows of the tower and the blocked archway to the former apse are not very diagnostic in terms of date, and may be late Anglo-Saxon or Norman. Fisher (1970, 102) believed the long jamb stones of the blocked doorway in the south wall of the tower-space to indicate a late Anglo-Saxon date, but as discussed above this doorway was a later insertion that probably re-used stones from the phase two tower-arch. The tower's west doorway does have a long megalithic jamb stone (fig. I.9.15), which may suggest Anglo-Saxon construction. Long stones also appear in the second stage of the tower's northeast quoin stones.

The strongest indication of the tower's date is the phase two tower-arch, built to link the tower with the new nave. Its megalithic jambs and simple, chamfered impost are Anglo-Saxon in appearance, so no later than the late 11th century. The tower must pre-date this tower-arch, indicating that it was built in the middle of the 11th century, if not before. This tower-arch implies that the present nave is of early Norman date: this is supported by the blocked windows in the south wall of the chancel (fig. I.9.16).

The west end of the church was rebuilt in the 19th century and extended in 1962 to form a baptistery, and a south porch was added in the 15th century (Fisher 1970, 101).

Interpretation

The tower in context

The church stands at the south end of the nucleated medieval village of East Dean (*Esdene* 1086), 'the east valley' (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 417). There is no evidence either in the landscape or from early property boundaries of any former enclosure or manor-house associated with the church (fig. I.9.17). East Dean Grange, a 1930s

mansion, lies on the west edge of the churchyard, but there is no indication on early OS maps that it was built on the site of an existing manor-house. The ruins of ‘Cop Hall’ are mentioned on the first edition OS map of East Dean (fig. I.9.17), but its age and status are unknown.

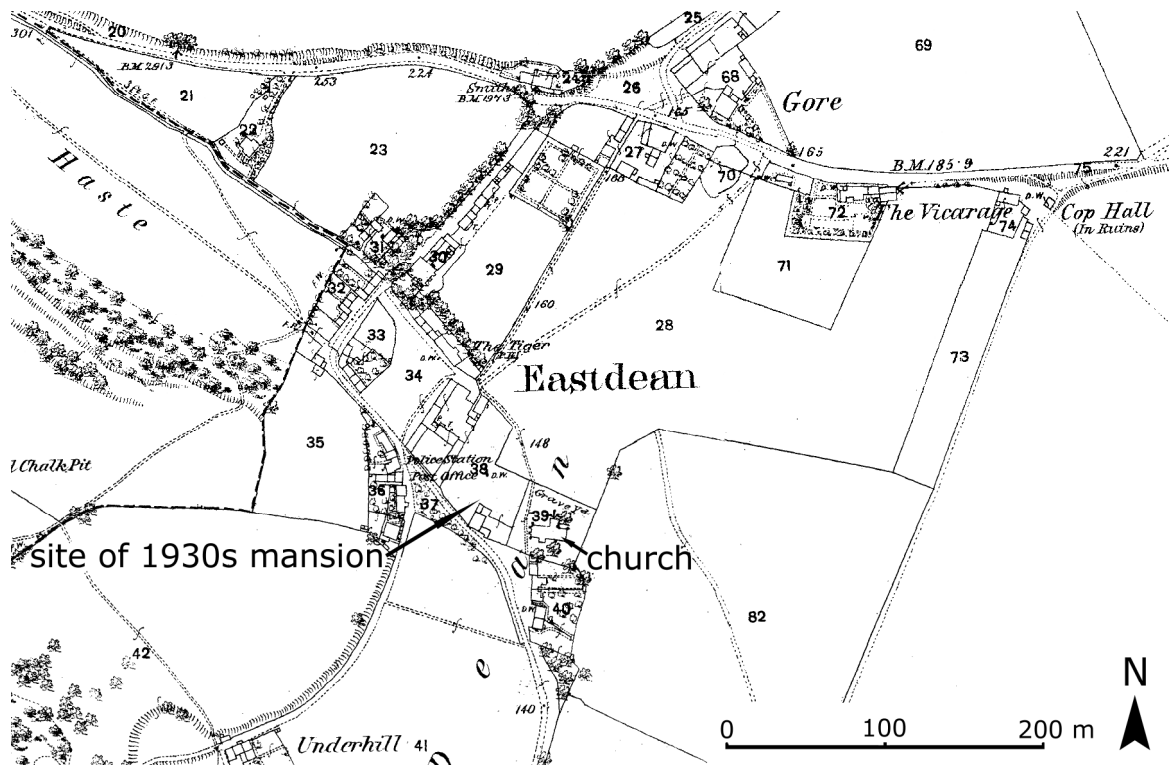


Fig. I.9.17 – First edition OS map of East Dean (1870s).

The pre-Domesday status of East Dean is obscure, but seems not to have been high. A royal estate at ‘Dene’ is mentioned both in Alfred’s will (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 175) and Asser’s *Life of Alfred* (79; Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 93). However, this is likely to have referred to either East Dean or West Dean in West Sussex, in the Rape of Chichester. By the early 11th century that area was known as *Æðelingadene* (‘Dean of the Æthelings’) (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 319).

The *Domesday Book* entry for East Dean is as follows:

In the manor of East Dean Countess Gode held 1½ virgates; it has never paid geld. There 2 villans have 1 plough. It is and was worth 5s. In East Dean Countess Gode held 1 hide, and it has never paid geld. There Wibert has 4 villans with 3 ploughs. It is and was worth 13s. In East Dean Gode held half a hide. There Walter has in demesne 2 ploughs, with 3 cottars. Then, and afterwards, [worth] 10s; now 20s.

(Williams and Martin 2002, 44-5)

Countess Gode (Godgifu; *d.* 1047) was Edward the Confessor's sister, a widow of Count Drogo (Dreux) of French Vexin, a region on the Île-de-France bordering Normandy. In 1035 she married Eustace II, Count of Bologne (*d. c.* 1087) as part of an alliance between her brother and Eustace's independent territory: he later changed sides and joined William in 1066. It is unclear why she was still listed as a *TRE* landholder nineteen years after her death, although it is possible that her land was returned back to the her brother the king rather than remaining with Eustace: at two of her *Domesday* estates – Headley in Surrey and Bury in Sussex – Edward is recorded as the tenant-in-chief in 1066.

Countess Gode's *Domesday* estates are scattered over many of the midland counties, with particular concentrations in Nottinghamshire and East Sussex. East Dean was a relatively modest East Sussex possession, compared to her holdings at Beddingham and Laughton, and to Bury in West Sussex which was assessed at 16 hides *TRE* (Williams and Martin 2002, 40). By 1087 East Dean was a minor possession of Count William of Eu, when it was fragmented and sublet it to tenants. Of these, Wibert had five hides at nearby Hersmonceux, which is therefore more likely than East Dean to have been his manorial seat. Walter is too common a name in the Sussex *Domesday* to draw any safe conclusions. Overall, there is no firm evidence that East Dean was a manorial centre when its tower was probably constructed in the mid-11th century, although as a manor of a little short of two hides worth 38s before its presumed fragmentation after 1066 it may have been worthy of an aristocratic residence.

The 1979 excavations to the east of the tower uncovered a layer of earth containing fragments of human bone beneath the foundations of the tower's apse, implying a pre-existing cemetery (Freke 1982). The extent, date or status of this putative cemetery remains unknown.

The tower in its landscape

Communication routes

The tower sits within a small valley in the South Downs only a mile from Beachy Head and the Birling Gap, the only landing-place on the south coast between Newhaven and Eastbourne. It is on the main north/south route (M 143) between the Birling Gap and the main Pevensey-Lewes road (M 142). This road appears to have been in use in the medieval period: the field-name *Castleway Furlong* ('the road to the castle') occurs along its route, and it meets Jevington at 'Street Farm' (Margary 1973, 71). The tower was not intervisible with the Gap or the Channel and would have made a poor

watchtower. It was not, as Fisher (1970, 102) suggests, built as a refuge against maritime raids.

Assembly-sites

The tower is not intervisible with the assembly-place of its hundred of Willingdon.

Beacon sites

The tower had no view of the region's early beacon network, which runs past Bishopstone [B], Jevington [17] and Hastings [14].

Fortifications

The only strategic site with which it is intervisible is 'Westburton' (*Westbortone* 1086), near Crowlink Farm a mile to the W of the church, which Mawer and Stenton (1930, 421) suggest it is a counterpart to 'Broughton' in Jevington parish.

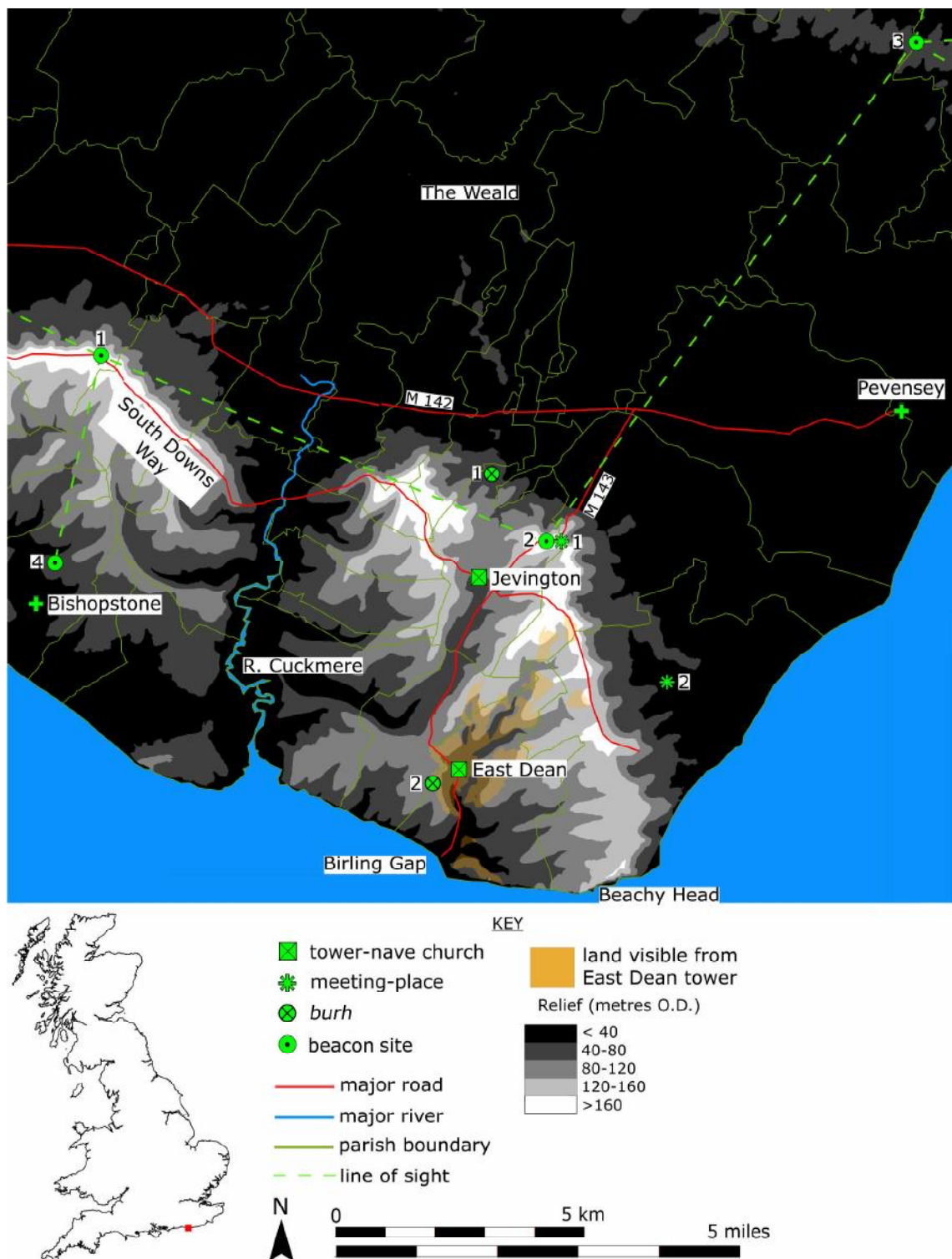


Fig. I.9.18 – The landscape context of East Dean

Key to fig. I.9.18

Assembly-sites

1. Willingdon Hundred is named after the village of Willingdon (*Wilendone* 1086), meaning ‘*Willa’s Hill*’, which probably refers to the spur of the hill on which the village stands (Anderson 1939a, 95). The hundred probably assembled on the boundary of this parish. The Neolithic camp and medieval beacon-site at Tas Combe is a likely location, adjacent to the Roman road to Willingdon (M 143).
2. Eastbourne hundred assembled at the top of Borough Lane, near the Old Town (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 426).

Beacon sites

1. Totnore (*Totenore* 1086; Mawer and Stenton 1930, 357) probably refers to what later became Firle Beacon on this site.
2. Tas Combe (*Tottscampe* 1261; Mawer and Stenton 1930, 425).
3. Wartling is recorded as a beacon in 1617 (Kitchen 1986, 189). The ‘ware’ element in its early place-name (*Werlinges* 1086; *Wareling* 1201) (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 483) is potentially indicative of an Anglo-Saxon origin.
4. Beacon Hill (*la Bekne* 1374), Bishopstone (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 365).

Fortifications

1. Broughton (*Bertone* 1086) contains a *burh* place-name element (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 422).
2. Westburton (*Westbortone* 1086), near Crowlink Farm (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 421).

Conclusion

East Dean tower-nave was probably constructed in the mid-11th century, with a small eastern apse. It was a relatively minor estate probably in royal hands at the time of the Conquest, before being fragmented and sub-let under the Norman Count William of Eu. The location of the local manor-house is unknown. The tower-nave lies in a valley and would have made a poor territorial marker and watchtower despite the presence of a beacon-system and strategic coastline in the vicinity. It was not intervisible with its hundredal assembly site.

Appendix I.10: St Michael's, East Teignmouth, Devon

Introduction

Three antiquarian illustrations are known of St Michael's church, which was wholly rebuilt in 1820 (Davidson 1881, 116 n.). A model of the pre-1820 church was made using timber from the demolished structure (Lake 1904, 104), but its present whereabouts are unknown. However, the illustrations are sufficient for us to be confident that it St Michael's was originally a tower-nave church (Cornelius 1945, 144; Fisher 1962, 387-8). The site is unexcavated.

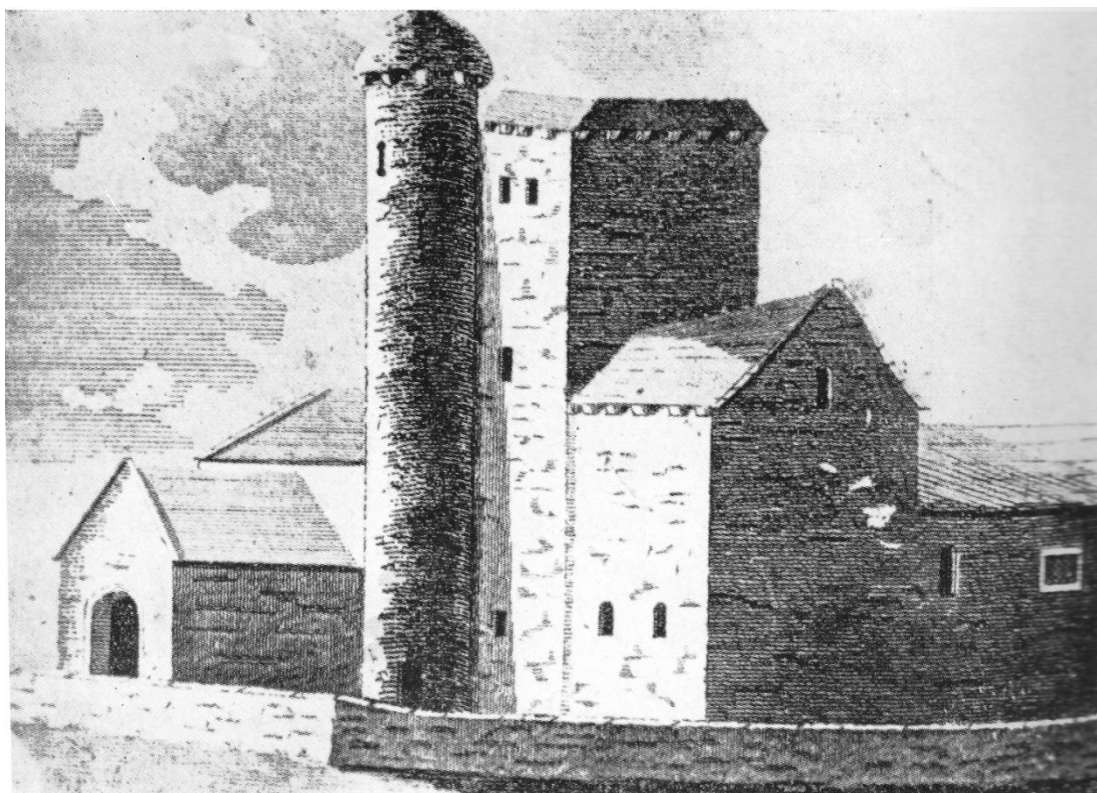


Fig. I.10.1 – John Swete's (1793) illustration of St Michael's church.

Description

The earliest of the three known illustrations of the pre-1822 church appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September 1793 (Swete 1793). Drawn from the southeast, it shows an approximately square tower three stories in height, lit by a single small rectangular window in the centre of its ground and first-floor levels (fig. I.10.1). The tower's second storey is lit by a pair of small rectangular windows, potential belfry-openings. No detail is visible on the east fact of the tower, and no doorway is visible. It has a flat roof surrounded by a plain overhanging sloped parapet supported by up to

seven corbels to the east and four on its obscured southern side. Swete describes these corbels as being decorated with ‘the heads of men and beasts’, as does a contemporary description by Richard Polwhele in his *History of Devonshire* (1793, 233).

A remarkable feature of the tower is a slender cylindrical stair-turret apparently abutting its southwest corner. It has a plain rectangular doorway facing southeast, and a pair of visible windows near its summit on the south and southeast sides that indicate the internal stairway ascended in a clockwise direction. The windows are small vertical slits apparently terminating in circular openings, giving them the appearance of gun-loops. The turret has an overhanging conical stone top supported by five visible corbels, which lends it the appearance of an Irish round tower.

To the east of the tower is a narrower chancel, approximately square in plan and half the height of the tower. It is lit from the south by a pair of small round-headed windows and has a further window high up in its gabled east end. The presence of this window implies that the chancel had an enclosed roofspace accessible via a doorway in the east wall of the first floor chamber of the tower. The chancel has a pitched roof terminating in a gable topped by long coping-stones, and supported to the south by six corbels. A lower structure with a pitched roof and at least one small round-headed window extends north of the chancel in apparent continuity with its east wall: Polwhele (1793, 233) confirms that it is a later addition. The low church nave and porch are visible extending to the west of the tower; the only visible detail is the pointed doorway in the porch.

The second illustration of the tower is a lithograph contained within George Oliver’s *Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon* (1840, 140), copied from a print published in Teignmouth by Edward Croydon in 1822 (fig. I.10.2). It views the tower from the southwest and is more detailed; it also differs from Swete’s drawing in a number of important respects. The lowest window in the tower’s south wall is here shown as a tall, narrow above-ground doorway, and the first and second floor openings are larger with round heads and traces of sills. It seems likely that these formerly blocked openings had been opened up after 1793. Interestingly, the second floor windows are off-set from the openings beneath, implying that there may formerly have been three of them. A string-course runs along the tower above ground floor level. The tower’s west elevation is visible, and has a pair of windows at third floor level similar to those on the south elevation, but with apparently pointed heads. They are also slightly higher up and taller than the southern examples, implying that they are later insertions or replacements.

Finally, the tower is shown with an arches corbel-table rather than individual corbels, forming a crude entablature beneath its parapet.

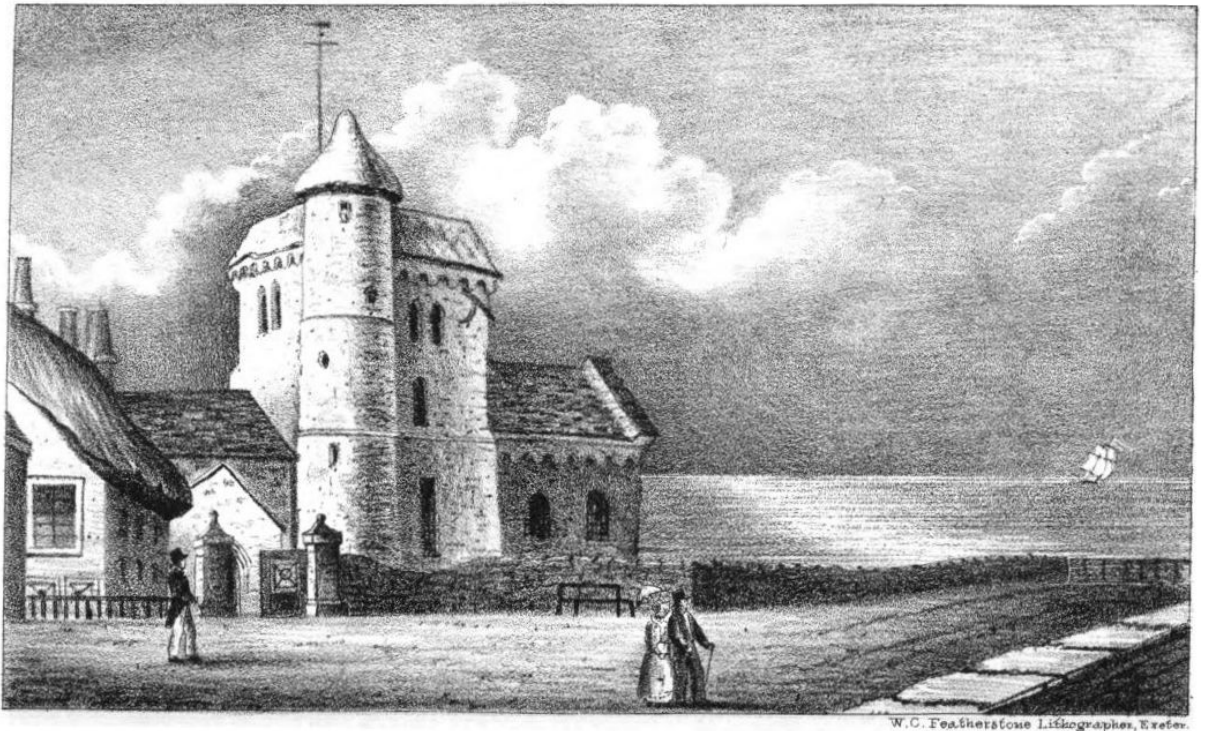
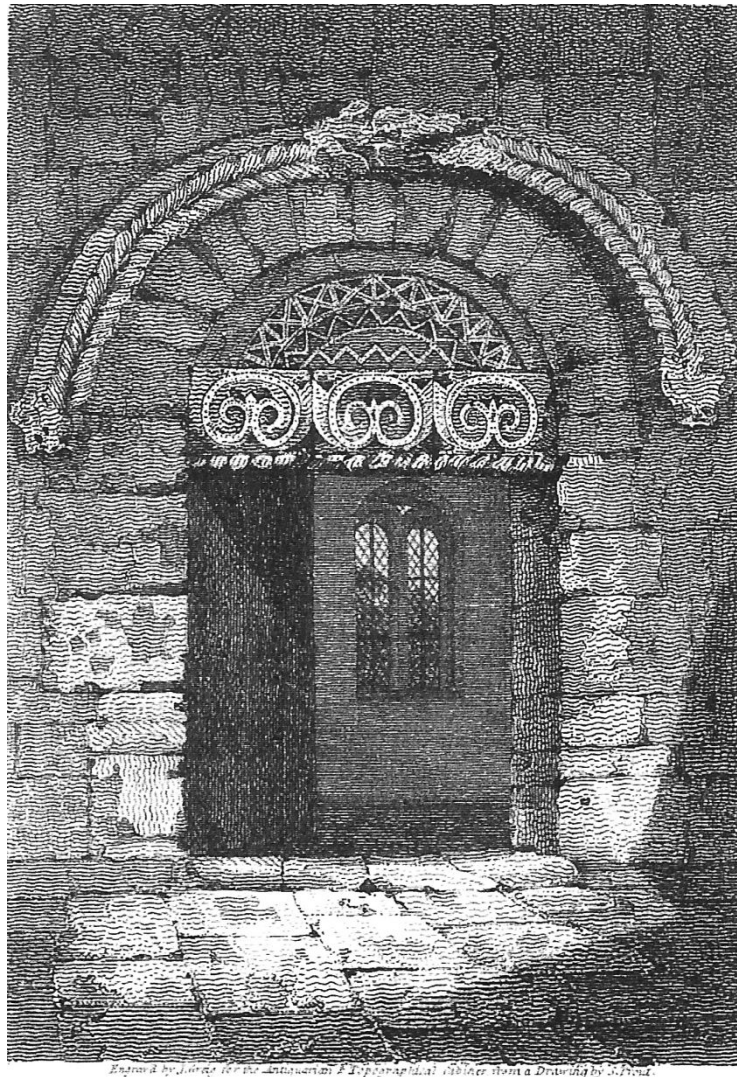


Fig. I.10.2 – Edward Croydon’s 1822 illustration of St Michael’s (Oliver 1840, 140).

The stair turret stands less awkwardly in relation to the rest of the tower in Croydon’s drawing, and is shown divided by a pair of string-courses. Importantly, its lower string-course forms a continuation with that on the main body of the tower, suggesting that the stair-turret is contemporary with it. The turret is shown with four small openings quite unlike those in Swete’s drawing. The lowest is a small round-headed vertical window, above which is a roundel, a squat round-headed window and then what may be a square opening with an elaborate sill. They resemble the openings in the late 10th- or early 11th-century stair-turret at All Saints’, Hough-on-the-Hill (Lincolnshire). The turret is also shown with no corbels and a distorted conical roof.

The chancel is more clearly narrower than the main body of the tower in this later image. Its two windows are much larger than in Swete’s drawing, further indication that the tower’s openings were unblocked or enlarged soon after 1793. Additionally, its corbels are of the entablature type and its gable end has a raised parapet rather than simple coping. Unfortunately the church nave is not clearly visible on this drawing either, but it does appear to be on a different alignment to the tower and chancel, and to abut the stair-turret. Its porch doorway is also more clearly of several orders and has a hood-mould.

The third known illustration of the church is an engraving of a drawing by Samuel Prout of the ‘north porch’ (fig. I.10.3) (Anon 1808).



N. Porch, East Teignmouth Church, Devon.

Fig. I.10.3 – ‘North Porch, East Teignmouth Church, Devon’, an engraving by J. Greig from a drawing by Samuel Prout, dated 1st March 1808 (Anon 1808).

It is uncertain what part of the church is meant by the ‘north porch’, since neither of the other known drawings (figs I.10.1 & I.10.2) give a clear indication of what lay to the north of the tower and chancel. It is presumably a doorway contained within the low, late structure which Swete depicts extending north of the chancel, implying that the chancel had a separate doorway originally. The doorway is round-headed with large ashlar jambs and smaller, more regular voussoirs. It has a tympanum with Romanesque chevron and dogtooth mouldings, supported by a monolithic lintel with a frieze of three simplified anthemions and a cable-moulding. It is under a prominent double-cable hoodmoulding with probable floriate label-stops. It is of firmly Norman construction (David Stocker pers. comm.).

Some idea of the dimensions of the church are given by a brief description shortly before it was demolished (Hyett 1817): the tower is given as 40 feet (12.20m) high, whilst the ‘church’ – presumably the tower, nave, chancel and ‘north porch’ – was 66 feet long (20.10m) and 34 broad (10.35m).

The only known description of the interior of the church is an excerpt from a letter of *c.* 1793:

In this church there is nothing remarkable except the screen which parts the chancel from the body of the church, which is about seven feet high, on the upper part of which there is a cornice, in the large hollow of which there is a rude hieroglyphical carving of several grotesque figures: the two middlemost are supporting a circle, which is placed in the centre, including the bust of a venerable old man, which a long beard, holding a globe in his left hand, and in his right a sceptre: on each side of these figures there is an urn, on the top of one there is the head of an angel, and on the other something like a flower; on each side of which again towards the two ends there is a figure something like the two former, supporting each the bust of a woman, encircled in something like a wreath: these four figures, which support the busts, are in the upper parts like women, but in the lower parts like fish, at the point or tail of each of which there is the head of a serpent, which are entwined with branches of various kinds of fruit. The construction of the roof of the original part of the church is worth the observation of the curious.

(Polwhele 1793, 233).

This elaborate rood screen would be unprecedented if it was original to the tower, and is presumably a later, perhaps Baroque, addition. It is unfortunate that the ‘curious’ church roof is not described.

Discussion

Building sequence

The original church probably consisted of the tower, chancel and stair-turret. It is clear from the Croydon drawing that the church nave abuts the tower, and that it was constructed at a different angle to it. It is probable that no previous nave existed in its place, due to the positioning of the stair-turret. The curious ‘north porch’ adjoining the chancel was also a later structure. The original church of St Michael was therefore almost certainly a tower-nave, and the similarity of its corbels with the chancel indicates their contemporaneity. The stair-turret is less certain in this respect, since on Swete’s drawing it appears to sit awkwardly with and abut the rest of the tower, although it does have similar corbels at its summit. However, on Croydon’s drawing the whole ensemble looks much more coherent and the lower string-course on the tower is continuous with

the stair-turret, although it does appear to lack corbels. We must therefore assume that it was original to the construction of the tower-nave, in the absence of strong evidence to the contrary.

Dating

The illustrations of the tower, contradictory and lacking in detail as they are, nevertheless depict a convincingly Norman structure. This is particularly clear in Croydon's depiction of an corbel-table (fig. I.10.2), a distinctively Norman feature, and in the engraving of the north doorway (fig. I.10.3). The corner location of its stair-turret is most closely paralleled by the very late Anglo-Saxon example at Wimborne Minster (Dorset), and the early Norman examples at Great Hale (Lincolnshire), Weaverthorpe (Yorkshire), North Elmham (Norfolk) and Bishopsteignton (Devon) (Johnson 1927; Parsons 1978; Heywood 1982). This implies that St Michael's is also of early Norman date, presumably late 11th century.

Contradicting this architectural evidence is a remarkable mention of 'St Michael's church' (*michaheles ciricean*) in the bounds of a genuine charter of 1044 as already standing (S 1003; Hooke 1994, 204). The architecture of the church is extremely unlikely to represent Anglo-Saxon work; it was presumably rebuilt in the decades after 1044.

Interpretation

The tower in context

Leofric and the manor of Teignmouth

St Michael's church lies on the seafront at Teignmouth, a small resort town on the south coast of Devon (fig. I.10.4). The charter of 1044 which mentions St Michael's church (S 1003) records a grant of land at Dawlish by Edward the Confessor to his chaplain Leofric, and its bounds describe a space corresponding with the present parishes of Dawlish and East Teignmouth (Davidson 1881, 113; Hooke 1994, 204-5). Leofric probably came from Cornwall, and was brought up and educated in the formerly Carolingian dukedom of Lotharingia. He is thought to have come from a noble Anglo-Saxon family exiled by the Danish king Swein or his successors in the early 11th century. He accompanied the future Edward the Confessor on his return from exile in 1041 as his chaplain, and remained a royal favourite thereafter. Appointed as Bishop of Crediton in 1046, he moved the see to Exeter in 1050 and held it unscathed after 1066 until his death in 1072 (Barlow 1972).

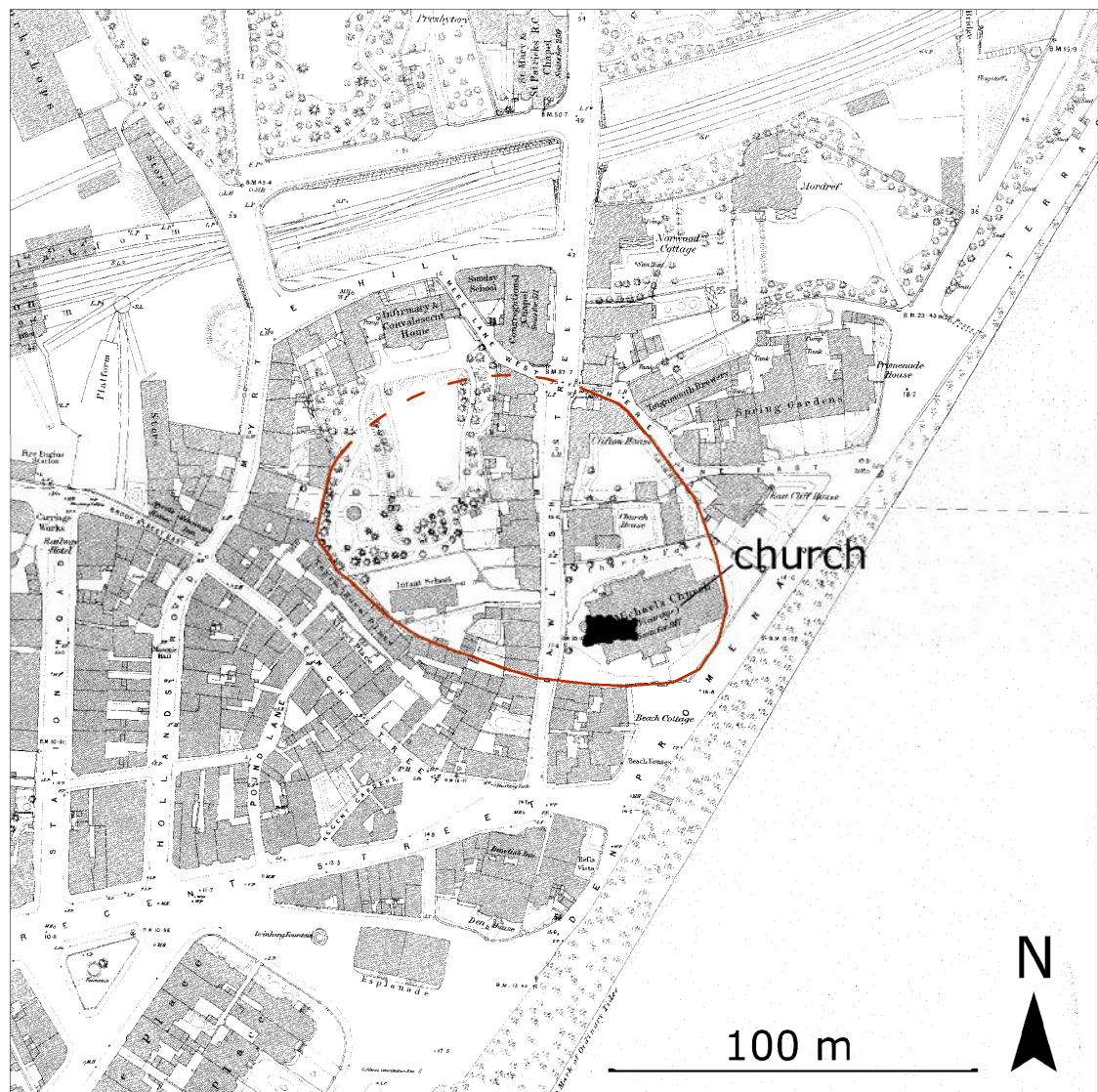


Fig. I.10.4 – First edition 1:500 OS plan of East Teignmouth, showing conjectured enclosure around the church.

Dawlish, including East Teignmouth, was Leofric's personal estate, and remained so after he became bishop. In 1069, William I granted land to Leofric, ostensibly for his new see of Exeter, at Bampton, Aston, and Chimney (all in Oxfordshire) and Holcombe (a manor in Dawlish) (Davidson 1881, 121-4). On his death in 1072, Leofric bequested land to his cathedral including, amongst others, 'lands of his own' at Bampton, Aston, Chimney and Holcombe, together with Dawlish and Southwood (another manor in Dawlish) (Davidson 1881, 127-8). This shows that William's 1069 grant had enriched Leofric's personal landholding as bishop rather than the estates of his cathedral: these lands only came to the cathedral following Leofric's death. Furthermore, of all the manors Leofric had either personally granted to the Cathedral or obtained from other sources, Dawlish was the only one which remained in the personal hands of his successor rather than held by sub-tenants. Put together, this

shows that until his death in 1072 Leofric kept the greater part of the Dawlish estate, including East Teignmouth, that had been granted to him in 1044. This was clearly the core of a personal landholding which he retained even whilst he was making strenuous efforts to lift the wealth of his cathedral from its parlous 1046 levels of two hides of land and seven oxen. Even after his death, Dawlish was favoured by Leofric's successor. It is therefore likely that the Dawlish estate was contained Leofric's residence. Interestingly, Leofric's Oxfordshire estate of Bampton may contain a parallel to his suggested tower-nave at East Teignmouth. Recent research has identified a monumental west tower to the Norman church there, besieged in 1142 and described in the mid-12th century *Gesta Stephani* as built 'in ancient times to wonderful design' (Potter 1976, 138-140; John Blair, pers. comm.).

The *Doomsday Book* entry for Dawlish is as follows:

The bishop [of Exeter] himself holds Dawlish. *TRE* it paid geld for 7 hides. There is land for 30 ploughs. In demesne are 2 ploughs and 3 slaves; and 30 villans and 8 bordars with 24 ploughs. There are 6 acres of meadow, and 12 acres of pasture, [and] scrubland 3 furlongs long and 1 furlong broad. Formerly [it was worth] £7; now £8.

(Williams and Martin 2002, 283).

Two miles to the west of East Teignmouth is Bishopsteignton which, as its name suggests, was the residence of the Bishops of Exeter from at least 1332. Called *Taintona* in the *Domesday Book*, its episcopal soubriquet is only recorded from 1262 (Gover *et al.* 1931, 487), casting doubt on whether this was the original residence of the bishops from 1050. It seems more likely Leofric would initially have resided in Dawlish, which he was loath to surrender. His successors may have moved to Bishopsteignton on account of its far greater wealth and its proximity to the royal *burh* of Kingsteignton: Bishopsteignton was valued at £24 in the *Domesday Book* to Dawlish's £8 (Williams and Martin 2002, 283).

The location of Leofric's putative Dawlish residence is uncertain. One candidate must be East Teignmouth, in the vicinity of St Michael's church, which lay within an enclosure, noted by Davidson (1881, 116 n.). John Leland's mid-16th century description of the church mentions 'an embatelid Waul':

Ther be too Tounes at this Point of the Haven by Name of *Teignemouth*, one hard joining to the other: The Souther of them is *Teignmouth Regis*, wher is a Market and a Chirch of S. *Michael*, and a peace of an embatelid Waul again the Shore: and this is taken for the Elder Town, and at the West

side of this Town is a peace of the sanddy Ground afore spoken of ther
caullid *the Dene*, wheron hath beene not many yeres syns diverse Howses
and Wine Cellers.

(Leland 1711, 55).

Teignmouth's heavy development has erased much of its early topography. Nevertheless, an ovoid enclosure is discernible in the urban topography around the church (fig. I.10.4). It may also be mentioned in the bounds of Leofric's 1044 charter, which record a 'great ditch' (*greatan dic*) immediately north of St Michael's church (S 1003; Hooke 1994, 204).

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.10.5)

Communication routes

St Michael's church stands in East Teignmouth on the shore at the mouth of the vulnerable Teign estuary, up which the Danes had sailed to sack Kingsteignton in 1001 (Swanton 1996, 132). The major long-distance route in the region is the Roman road from Exeter to Teignbridge (M 491) which is followed by present roads and parish boundaries, implying its continued use. It is likely to have been extended south to Totnes in the late Anglo-Saxon period, linking together the two Alfredian *burhs*. The tower-nave would have made a poor watchtower inland, but was superbly placed to view the maritime approach to the Teign estuary and the estuary itself as far as Teignbridge: the major threat to the region would have been from the sea.

Assembly-sites

East Teignmouth stands within the hundred of Exminster, the assembly-site of which is unknown.

Beacon sites

The tower-nave's limited inland viewshed encompasses part of a beacon-system which encompasses much of Devon (fig. I.10.6). Many of these place-names are late, but others are sufficiently early to indicate that the system has early origins. It has previously been suggested that a beacon-system was active in the area in the early medieval period as the counterpart to the network of strategically-placed *burhs* (Slater 1991).

Fortifications

In the tenth century Edward the Elder was probably responsible for founding the small *burh* of Kingsteignton mid-way along the Exeter-Totnes road, presumably to guard the lowest crossing of the Teign. Kingsteignton was the head of a royal hundred in the *Domesday Book*, and excavation has confirmed that it was protected by a defended enclosure associated with a *burh* place-name (Haslam 1984b, 275-9; Weddell and Henderson 1986; Griffeth 1985, 99). Several other defended places, attested by *burh* place-names, lay nearby, and it is interesting that the majority of the *burh* names recorded in Devon are associated with extant hill-forts. A further twenty-two are associated with an earthwork or an enclosure, of varying dates (Griffeth 1985). St Michael's tower would have made an extremely poor watchtower over almost the entirety of this inland defensive network.

Estates

St Michael's did not act as a landmark for the personal estates of Leofric, as recorded on his 1072 bequest to Exeter Cathedral (Davidson 1881, 127-8).

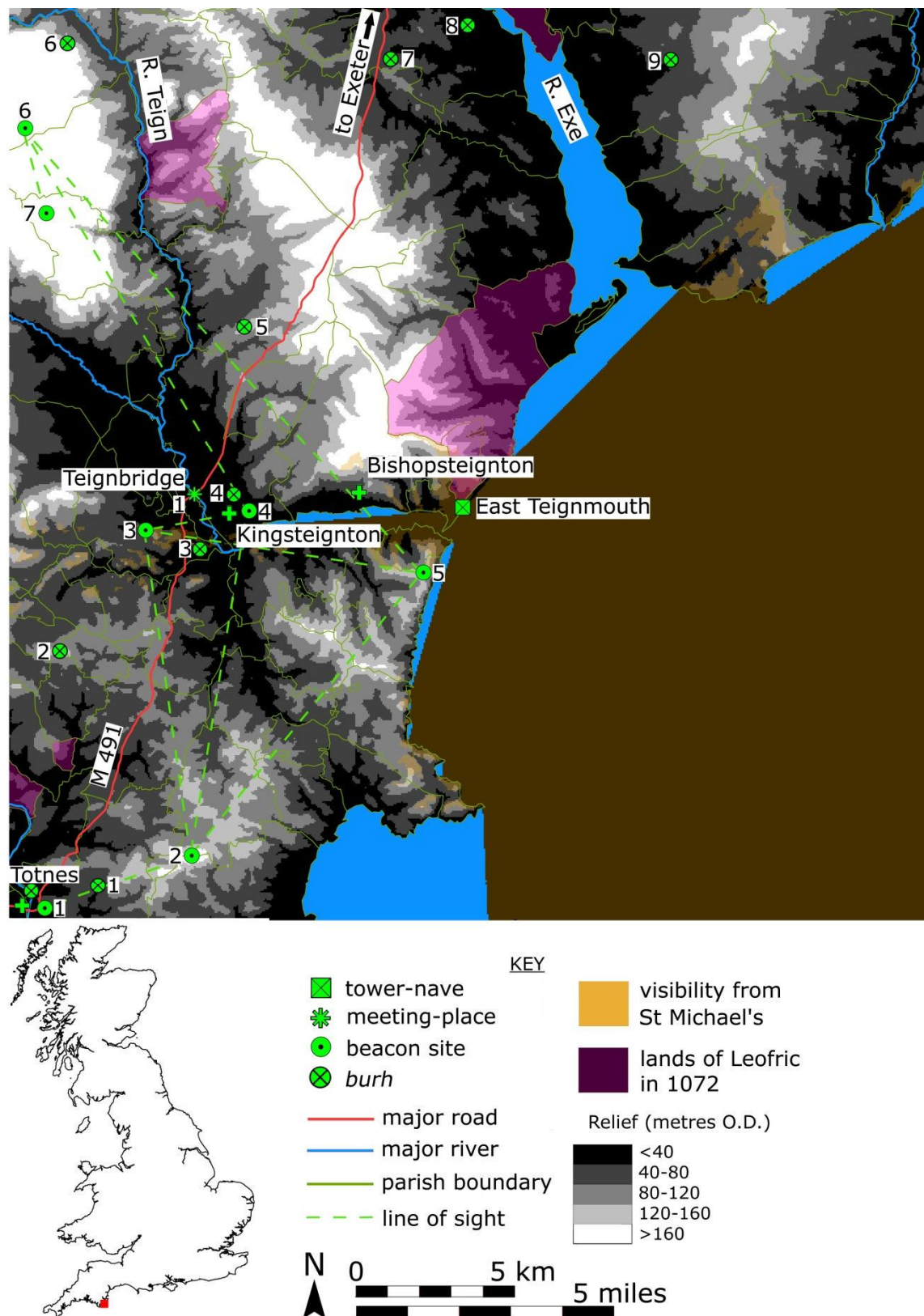


Fig. I.10.5 – The landscape context of East Teignmouth

Key to fig. I.10.5

Assembly-sites

1. Teignbridge hundred met at Teignbridge (Anderson 1939b, 98).

Beacon sites

1. Totnes (*Totanæs* 979-1016) (Gover *et al.* 1931, 334).
2. Beacon Hill, near Marldon.
3. Daracombe Beacon, near Highweek (*Dodecumbe* 1238) (Gover *et al.* 1931, 474).
4. Ware (*le Were* 1277), Kingsteignton (Gover *et al.* 1931, 479).
5. The Beacon, Stoketeignhead.
6. Beacon Down (1754), Bridford (Gover *et al.* 1931, 423)
7. Tottiford (*Toteworthi* 1333), Hennock (Gover *et al.* 1931, 472).

Fortifications

1. Weekaborough in Berry Pomeroy (Gover *et al.* 1931, 100).
2. Denbury (*Devenaberia* 1086) (Gover *et al.* 1931, 523).
3. Berry Knowles (*Biriknolle* 1318) in Highweek (Gover *et al.* 1931, 474).
4. Kingsteignton was protected by a defended enclosure associated with a *burh* place-name (Haslam 1984b, 275-9; Weddell and Henderson 1985; Griffeth 1985, 99).
5. Grimsbury (*Grendelbury* 1330) in Chudleigh (Gover *et al.* 1931, 489).
6. Ashbury Hill (*Ashberg Hyll* 1584) in Bridford (Gover *et al.* 1931, 423).
7. Kenbury Wood (*Kenebirie* 1083) in Exminster (Gover *et al.* 1931, 497).
8. Milbury Farm (*Meleburi* 1330) in Exminster (Gover *et al.* 1931, 496).
9. Woodbury (*Wudebirig* 1072-1103) (Gover *et al.* 1931, 601).

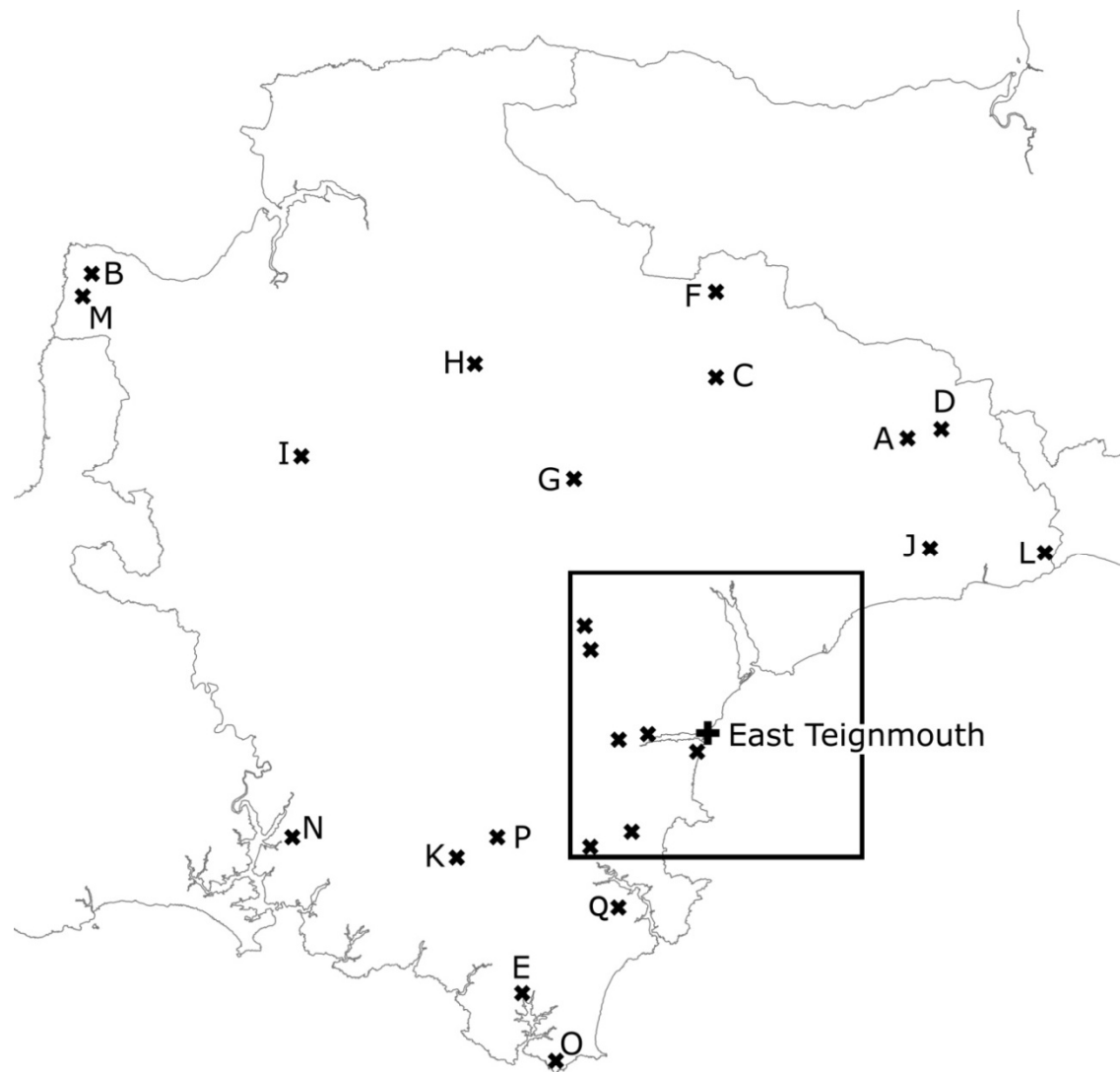


Fig. I.10.6 – Beacon sites in Devon

Key to fig. I.10.6

- A. Beacon (*Bekyn* 1469), Luppitt (Gover *et al.* 1931, 643).
- B. Firebeacon (*Fyerbykene* 1400), Hartland (Gover *et al.* 1931, 78).
- C. Firebeacon (*Fyrebeken* 1571), Tiverton (Gover *et al.* 1931, 545).
- D. Beacon Hill (1713), Upottery (Gover *et al.* 1931, 651).
- E. Doddbrooke (*Dodebroca* 1086) (Gover *et al.* 1931, 305). [is in a dell with a brooke]
- F. Dodddiscombe (*Doddescumb* 1242), Bampton (Gover *et al.* 1931, 532).
- G. Doddridge (*Doderig* 1275), Sandford (Gover *et al.* 1931, 413).
- H. Dodsyard (*Dodeherd* 1238), Chulmleigh (Gover *et al.* 1931, 379).
- I. Tottleigh Barton (*Totele(g)* 1244), Highampton (Gover *et al.* 1931, 146).
- J. Tottiskay (*Tottekesweye* 1330), Southleigh (Gover *et al.* 1931, 632).
- K. Ware (19th century), Ugborough (Gover *et al.* 1931, 287).
- L. Ware (1670), Uplyme (Gover *et al.* 1931, 479).
- M. Wargery (*Wardsworthe* 1570-74), Hartland (Gover *et al.* 1931, 77).
- N. Warleigh House (*Wardlegh* 1242), Tamerton Foliot (Gover *et al.* 1931, 242).
- O. Prawle Point (*preula* 1086), East Prawle (Gover *et al.* 1931, 319-20).
- P. Brent Hill, near South Brent, has also been suggested as a beacon-site due to its very high visibility in the landscape of South Devon and the presence of postulated medieval earthworks on its summit (Rainbird 1998, 161).
- Q. Capton (*Capieton* 1278) in Dillisham is from OE **cape*, ‘look-out place’ (Ekwall 1960, 86).

Conclusions

St Michael's church was a tower-nave constructed in the late 11th century on the site of an earlier church with the same dedication. Its builder was Leofric, Edward the Confessor's chaplain and later Bishop of Exeter, on land granted to him by the king. Leofric retained this private estate after he rose to episcopal office: St Michael's tower-nave appears to have stood within an enclosure, and presumably acted as Leofric's private chapel. The tower may also have had a role as a watchtower over the seaward approach to the vulnerable Teign estuary, and potentially over adjacent links in a regional beacon-system, although it had little visibility inland. By the 13th century the bishops of Exeter had their residence in nearby Bishopsteignton, and East Teignmouth became a conventional parish church before it was ignominiously demolished in 1820.

Appendix I.11: St Bartholomew's, Fingest, Buckinghamshire

Introduction

The extraordinary Norman church of St Bartholomew, Fingest (fig. I.11.1) has received little attention from scholars since William Forsyth's detailed account (1903). The Royal Commission volume for Buckinghamshire added little to Forsyth's work (RCHME 1912, 156-7), and it has since been mentioned only in passing in general surveys of Norman architecture (*e.g.* Clapham 1934; Fernie 2000). No archaeological interventions are recorded for the site.



Fig. I.11.1 – St Bartholomew's church from the south.

Description

The church is externally and internally rendered, making a detailed examination of its fabric impossible. Forsyth's 1903 measured plan, sections and elevations of the church have therefore been used in the following description.

The plan of the church (fig. I.11.2).

The church presently consists of a vast west tower, a long, narrow nave, a 13th century chancel and a south porch added in a major restoration of 1886/7. The buttresses at the east end of the chancel and on the south wall of the nave were also added at this time. The tower measures 8.35 m square externally and 5.9 m internally with walls 1.2 m thick. The nave is only 5.9 m wide with walls 0.9 m thick and a length of 12.2 m. The 13th century chancel, which is the same width as the nave, adds a further 7.6 m of

length. The nave is at an angle from the tower, and splays to a greater width of 6.2 m at its east end compared to its junction with the tower. It seems also to have been built on inferior foundations, since its south wall has a pronounced lean which is not shared by the tower. All these factors suggest that the nave is not contemporary with the tower, for which further evidence is discussed below.

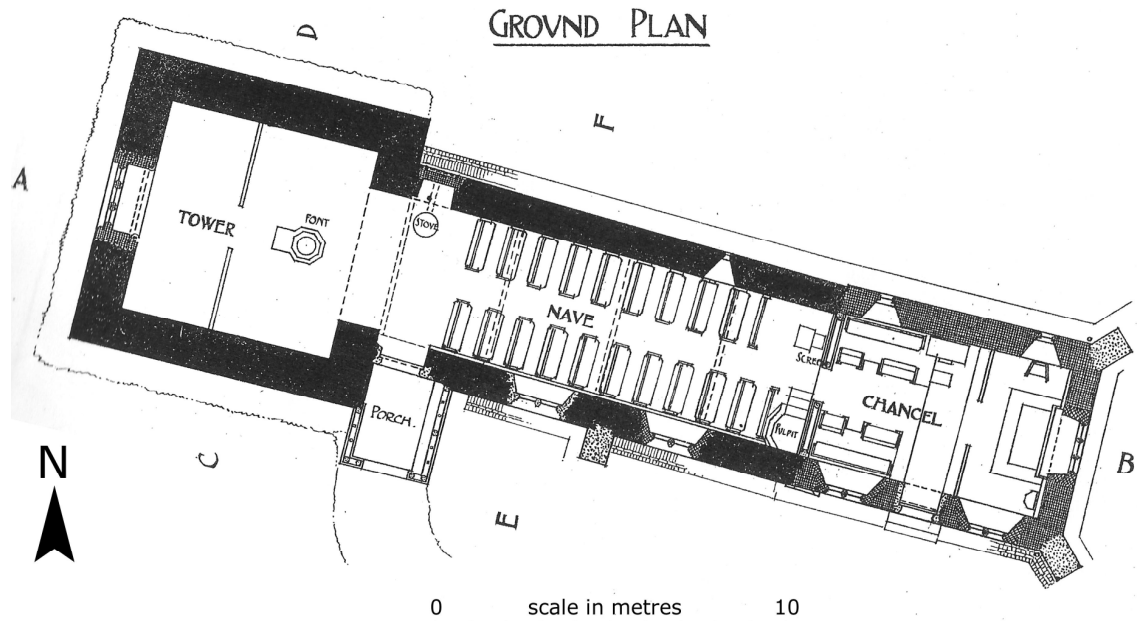


Fig. I.11.2 – Ground floor plan of the tower. The letters denote section drawings in fig. I.11.3 (Forsyth 1903, 458).

The external elevations of the tower

The tower is 15.55 m tall to the level of its post-medieval twin-gabled roof. It is unknown whether the tower stands its original height. It is two stages externally, the upper of which is set back from the lower at a level of 11.9 m. Internally, it is divided into three stages (fig. I.11.3). Its quoins are partially visible through the render on all four corners of the tower; they are small, roughly-dressed irregular blocks of sandstone laid to no pattern.

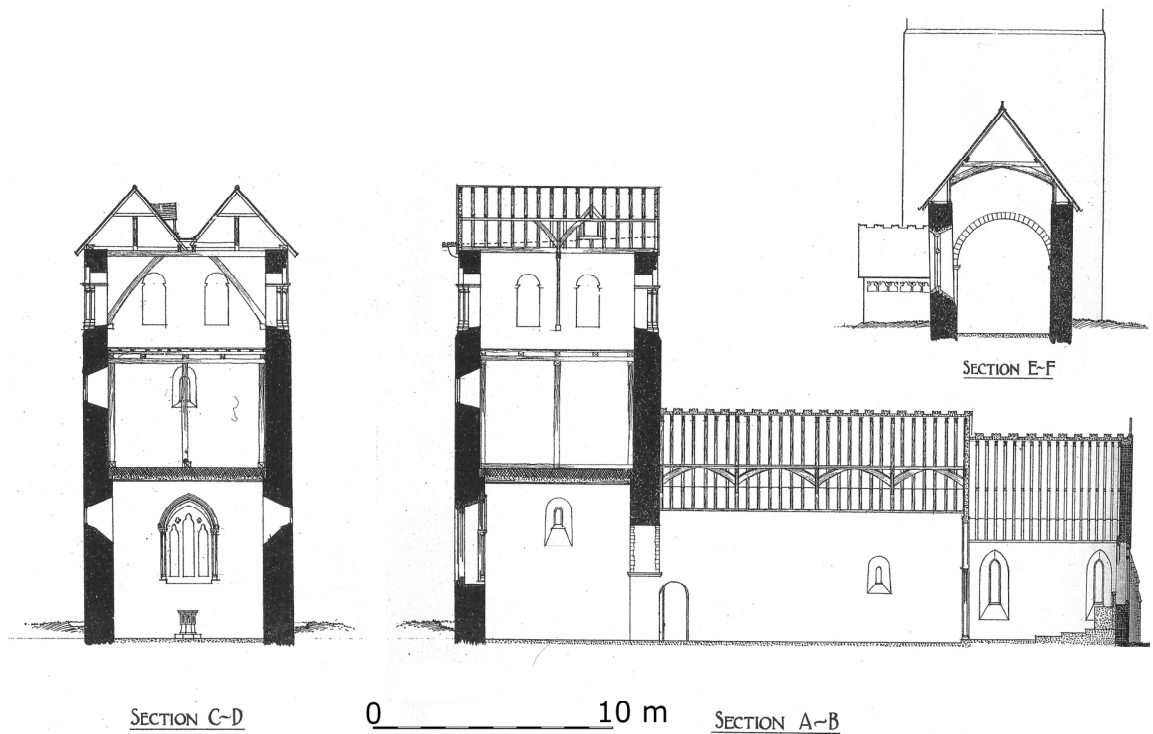


Fig. I.11.3 – Section drawings of St Bartholomew's church (relating to letters in plan, fig. I.11.2) (Forsyth 1903 461).

North elevation (figs I.11.4 & I.11.5).

The only visible feature on the lower stage of the north elevation is a small round-headed window 0.3 m wide by up to 0.75 m high, located 3.95 m from ground level in the centre of the elevation. It appears to be cut from a single block of stone, although this may be an illusion from cement rendering. It is plain except from a continuous running chamfer along its sill, jambs and head. The upper stage has a pair of ornate round-headed belfry openings 0.75 m wide by up to 2.15 m tall. Each opening has two orders of moulding supported by engaged columns with a mixture of Romanesque scalloped and cushion capitals, and plain bell-shaped bases. The outer openings have elaborate hood-mouldings which spring from plain chamfered impost-mouldings; the inner opening of the western window has a heavy torus moulding whilst the eastern one is plain.



Fig. I.11.4 – The north and west elevations of the tower.

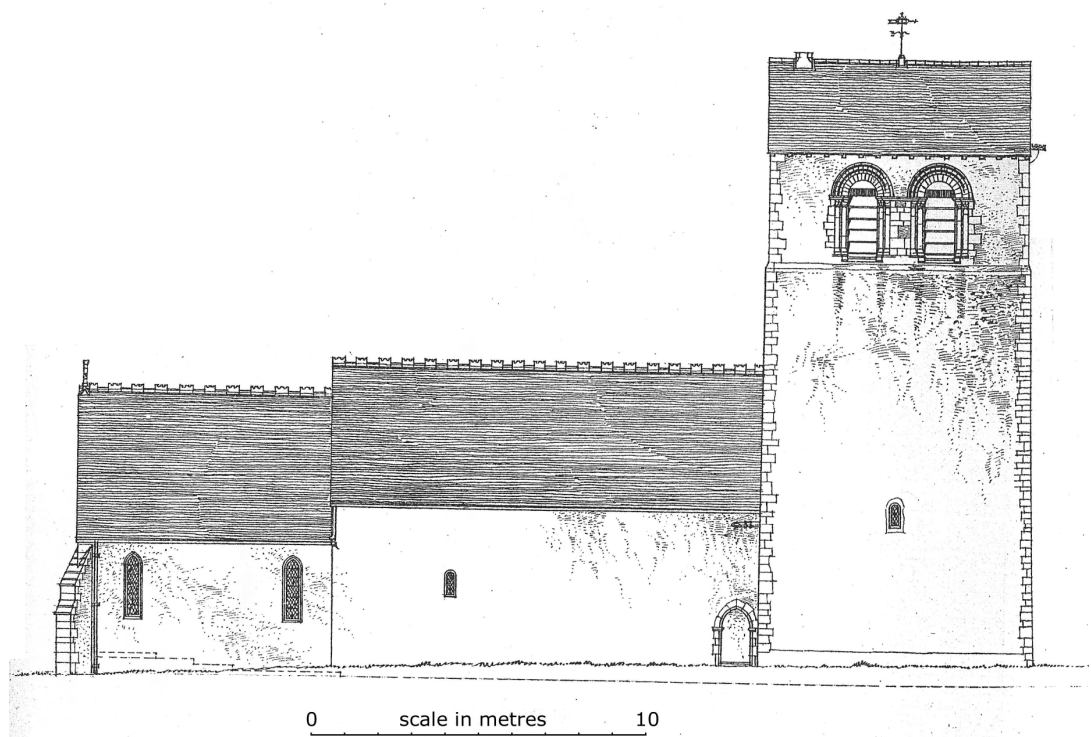


Fig. I.11.5 – North elevation drawing of the church (Forsyth 1903 460).

East elevation (fig. I.11.6).

The only features visible externally on the tower's eastern elevation are its pair of belfry-openings, which are of the same type as on the other elevations of the tower.



Fig. I.11.6 – The east elevation of the tower. Drawing from Forsyth (1903 460).

South elevation (figs I.11.1 & I.11.7)

The lower stage of the south elevation has a pair of small, central round-headed window openings, one at ground-floor and one at first-floor level. The lower of the two is the counterpart to that on the north elevation, and is at the same level. The upper is 9.45 m above ground level and is slightly larger, at 0.40 m wide by up to 0.8 m tall. Its jambs and voussoirs are formed from multiple small roughly-dressed blocks of sandstone. Its belfry openings are unusual in that the impost-mouldings extend some way to either side to form a string-course, although they may well be products of the 1886/7 restoration.

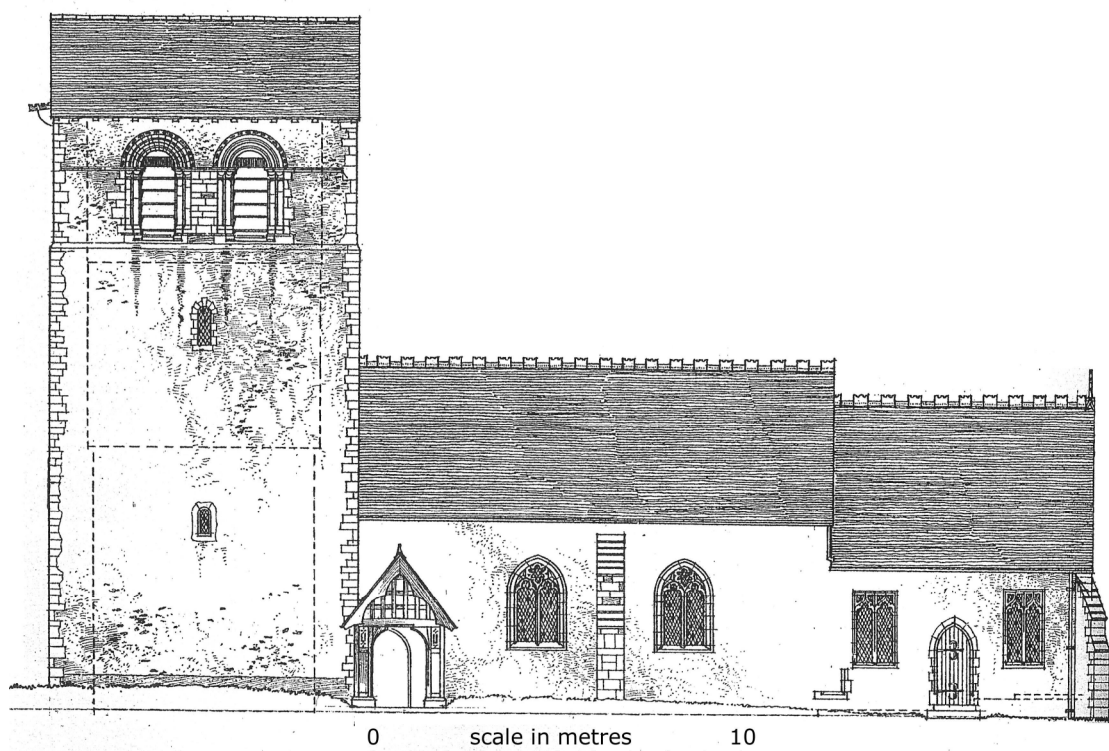


Fig. I.11.7 – South elevation drawing of the church (Forsyth 1903 459).

West elevation (figs I.11.4 & I.11.8)

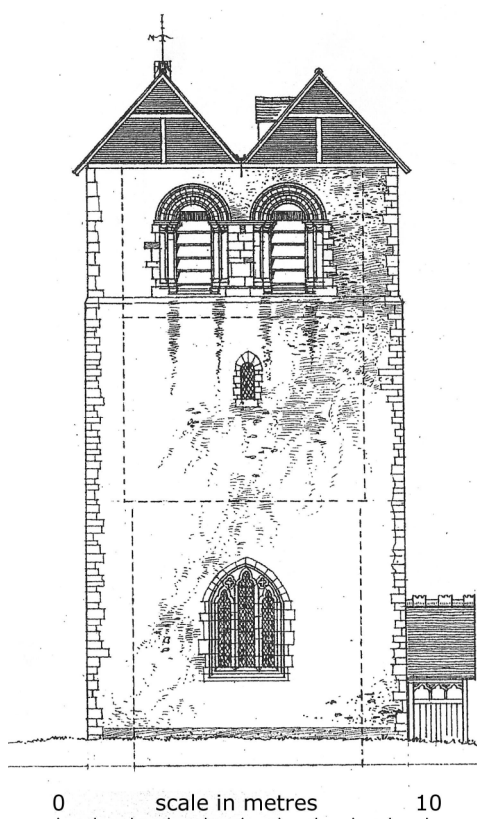


Fig. I.11.8 – West elevation drawing of the church (Forsyth 1903 459).

The west elevation has a large traceried window of 13th century date at ground floor level. This may be the former location of a doorway. At first floor level lies the counterpart of the window at this level on the south elevation. The belfry-openings are of the same type as on the other elevations of the tower.

The internal elevations of the tower

Ground floor level

The tower space is plastered, so the only visible early features are the deep single-splays of the windows in the north and south walls. It has a large plain tower-arch of a single order 3.8 m wide and up to 4.7 m high (fig. I.11.9). Its large dressed voussoirs of are visible beneath the plaster. They spring from a heavy plain chamfered impost-moulding which appears to have been renewed, presumably in 1886/7. The nave walls abut both the voussoirs and impost-moulding of the tower arch, and must therefore be of later construction (fig. I.11.9); this is also indicated by the structural irregular plan and poor foundations of the nave, described above.



Fig. I.11.9 – Left: The tower-arch, from the church nave. Note the pair of doorways abutting the east face of the tower-arch. **Right:** The south wall of the nave abutting the impost and voussoirs of the tower-arch. View from the church nave.

First-floor level

The present first floor chamber is likely to be at its original height, since it rests on an off-set in the internal face of the tower wall (fig. I.11.3). The only visible features beneath its plaster are the single-splayed windows in the south and west walls, which are less deeply-splayed than those at ground floor level.

Second floor level

The only visible features in the plastered belfry-chamber are the belfry-openings, which are largely obscured by timber shuttering.

The rest of the church

Aside from its tower, the church consists of a nave, a 13th century chancel, and a 19th century south porch. In the south wall of the nave is a 14th century window with a 19th century copy to the west (RCHME 1912, 157). In the north wall is a single-splayed round-headed window of very similar type to those in the ground floor of the tower (fig. I.11.10).



Fig. I.11.10 – The single-splayed window in the north wall of the church nave.

At the west end of the nave are a pair of external doorways (fig. I.11.11), which contain irregularities bearing upon whether the nave is original to the tower. The northern doorway is 0.75 m wide by 2.0 m tall, and is clearly of two phases of construction. Its

outer face is presently inaccessible beyond a boiler-room, but it is thought to be a 13th century remodelling of an existing Norman doorway (Forsyth 1903, 460; RCHME 1912, 157). The south doorway is much larger, up to 1.35 m wide and 2.1 m tall. Its outer face is thought to be a 19th century remodelling of an existing Norman doorway (Forsyth 1903, 460). Its inner arch is round-headed and curiously distorted.



Fig. I.11.11 – The north and south doorways at the west end of the nave, abutting the east face of the tower-arch (fig. I.11.9). **Left:** The south doorway (see also fig. I.11.9). **Right:** The north doorway. The north impost-moulding of the tower-arch is visible in the wall above.

It is likely that neither doorway dates from the original construction of the church, because each belongs to a nave which is itself not of the same phase as the earlier tower. The western jambs of both doorways incorporate the stubs of earlier walls. The stub incorporated by the northern doorway cannot be of the same date as the tower, since it would have abutted the voussoirs and impost-moulding of the tower arch. The stub incorporated by the southern doorway is interesting, since it is set back from the jamb of the tower-arch. If its line is followed up the elevation, it would not have abutted the voussoirs and impost-moulding of the tower-arch. This may be a fragment of the south wall of the church's original eastern structure, and that its greater distortion compared to the northern doorway is due to the need to incorporate this stub, which may itself be a fragment of an earlier doorway. This would explain why present doorway is awkwardly located at the extreme west end of the nave.

Discussion

Building materials

From what is visible, the quoins and belfry openings of the tower appear to be constructed from local oolitic limestone. The building materials of its walls are unknown.

Building sequence

Phase 1

The first phase of the church seems to have consisted of the west tower with a narrower eastern structure in the place of the later nave, which abuts the voussoirs and impost-moulding of the tower-arch (fig. I.11.9). The present nave is on a different alignment to the tower, is built on inferior foundations, and its walls splay out to the east, in contrast to the carefully constructed walls of the tower. The tower's original eastern structure probably survives as the stub of wall incorporated into the jamb of the south doorway (fig. I.11.11).

We can be confident that the present nave was not built upon the foundations of an original. Assuming it was not re-set from elsewhere, the Norman window in the north wall of the present nave tells us that any previous nave would have been rebuilt almost as soon as it had been constructed, to no apparent purpose, since the present nave appears to be of similar date to the tower. We can also assume that a rebuilt nave would have shared the foundations of any predecessor, which is clearly not the case since the foundations of the present nave are not aligned with the tower and belong to walls which obscure its tower-arch. There must originally have been an eastern structure, since there is no reason to believe that the tower-arch is not original, but this structure was not a nave. We can therefore assume that it was a modest chancel, and that the capacious tower-space acted as the original nave of the church. It may have been accessed via a predecessor of the present southern doorway, or a doorway which was later replaced by the large 13th century window in the centre of the west elevation.

Finally, Oliver Creighton (1997) suggests that the tower's belfry stage is a later addition, indicating the main body of the tower is pre-Norman. A comparable example is the even larger Anglo-Saxon tower-nave of the St George, Oxford [21], built c. 1000, which was long assumed to have been of Norman construction due to its later belfry-openings. Unfortunately, this question cannot be pursued at Fingest due to its external plaster.

Phase 2

Soon after the original tower-nave was constructed its putative chancel was replaced by a nave and the structure became a conventional congregational church, albeit one with an abnormally large western tower. The southern doorway was either inserted or modified, and the northern one added.

Phase 3

The present chancel was added in the later medieval period, and various other inconsequential changes such as the insertion of windows and the modification of the northern doorway were also undertaken at this time.

Dating

Both the nave and tower have been suggested as early 12th century in date, based on the tower's distinctive belfry openings, and the single-splay windows in the tower and the north wall of the nave (RCHME 1912, 156). However, it is clear on structural grounds that the tower pre-dated the nave, raising the possibility that either the tower is earlier or the nave is later than this early 12th century date. The question may hinge on whether the tower's belfry-stage is indeed a later addition, as has been suggested. This cannot be known without a thorough survey; suffice to say that the initial tower-nave on the site was constructed in the early Norman period and converted into a congregational church soon after.

InterpretationThe tower in context (fig. I.11.12)

St Bartholomew's church stands in the small village of Fingest, which does not appear in the *Domesday Book*. It lies at the boundary of several parishes, implying that it was established from an older subdivided estate. Fingest is thought to have been a royal possession in the early Norman period, at the time the church was built, on the basis that it was granted to the Abbey of St Albans by Henry I (1100-1135) (Langley 1797, 211; Parker 1903, 467). This raises the possibility that the church was either constructed by the king himself, his tenant, or by the Abbot of St Albans. The estate passed to the Bishop of Lincoln in 1163, which is too late for him to be considered a candidate. The bishop's manor-house, which was first mentioned in 1226, lay 150 m to the NW of the church, and within the same bounded part of the village plan (Page 1925, 42-5; Parker

1903, 467; Farley 1979, 91). It is possible that it preserves the site of the earlier manor-house, in the same *curia* as the church.

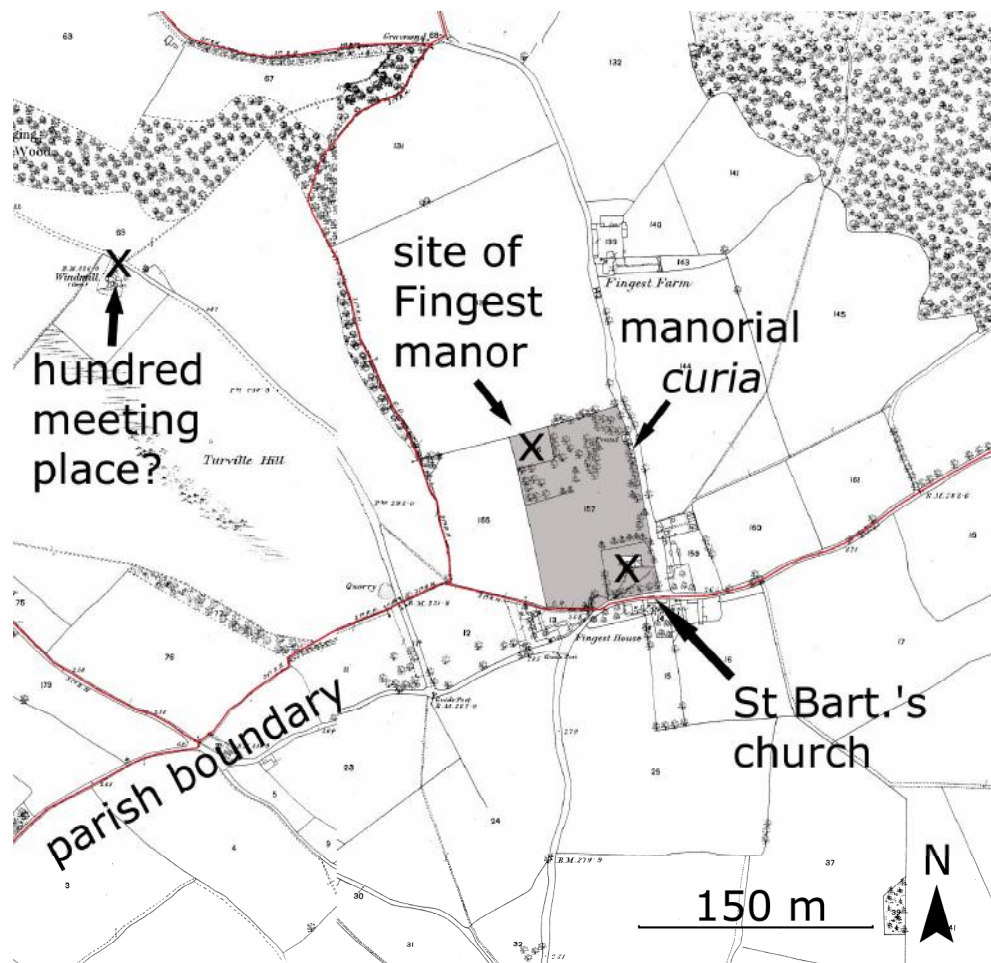


Fig. I.11.12 – First edition OS map of Fingest

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.11.13)

Communication routes

Fingest sits deep in the Chilterns near the boundary between Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. It is in a remote location far from any known early medieval towns or long-distance routes aside from the Thames itself which runs three miles to the south.

Assembly-sites

Fingest lies in the hundred of Desborough (*Dustenberg* 1086), whose assembly-site has been suggested to have been Desborough Castle (*Dusteburg* 1227), an Iron Age hillfort, on the basis of the shared name alone. However, not only is this not strong evidence in itself, but the hillfort's name is sufficiently late for it to have been named after its hundred, not the other way around (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 174, 207). A far better candidate is Fingest itself (*Tingehurst* 1163), 'assembly hill' (Mawer and Stenton 1925,

176), which lies on the hundred boundary at the junction of four parishes. The hill in question was probably Turville Hill, which overlooks the intersection of the parishes half a mile west of the church.

Beacon sites

Despite its size, the tower of St Bartholomew's church would neither have been highly visible in the landscape nor would it have made a useful watchtower. Despite the nearby presence of several prominent hilltops, the tower lies at the deep within a cleft of the Chilterns surrounded on three sides by higher ground. Had it been located on higher ground even within the same parish, the tower would have been intervisible with two possible early beacon sites.

Fortifications

The tower was not built in relation to any known local fortifications.

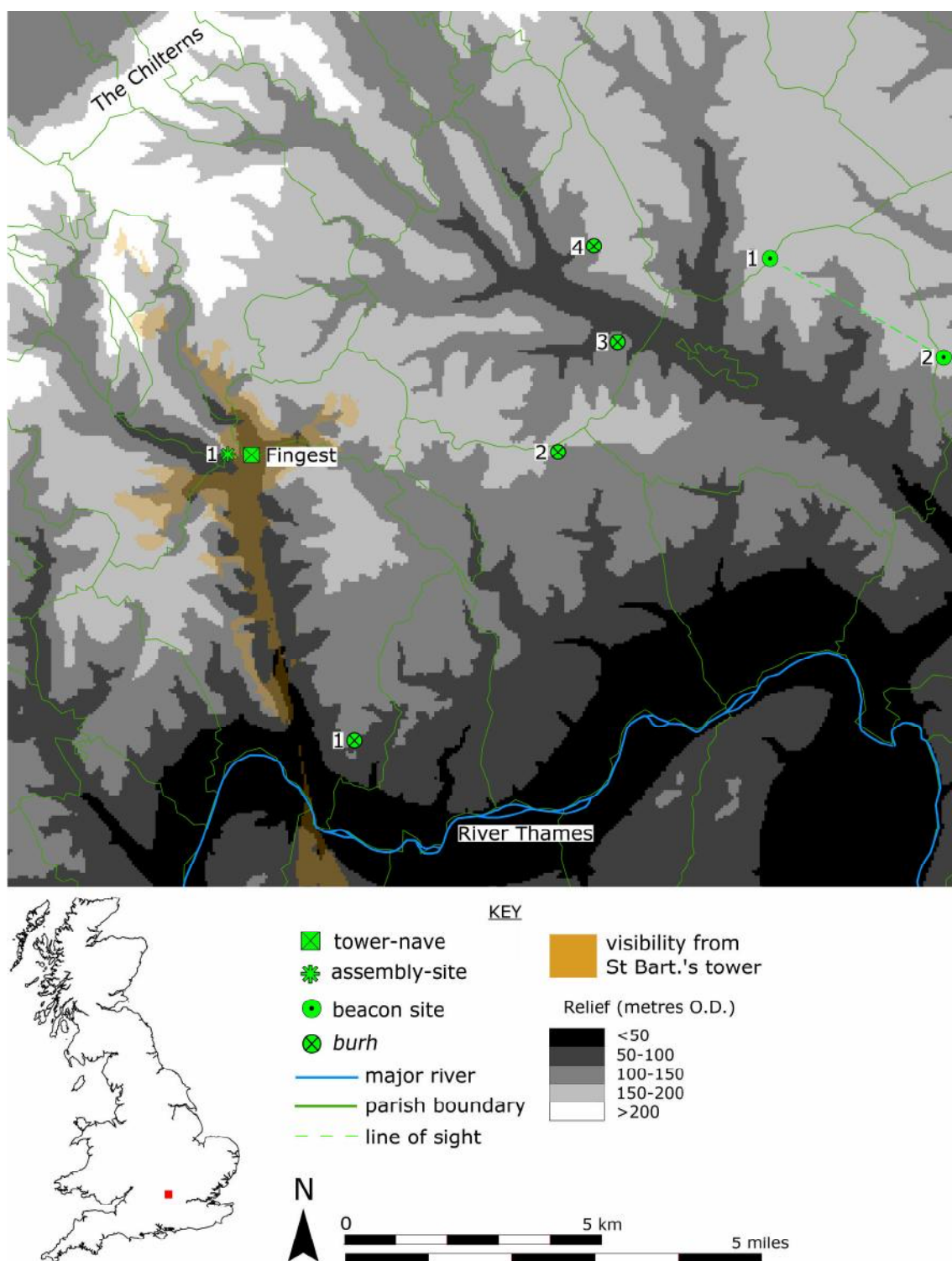


Fig. I.11.13 – The landscape context of Fingest.

Key to fig. I.11.13

Assembly-sites

1. The hundred of Desborough is likely to have met at Fingest itself (*Tingehurst* 1163), ‘assembly hill’ (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 176).

Beacon sites

1. Totteridge, Chipping Wycombe (*Tuterugge* 1179) (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 203).
2. Beaconsfield (*Bekenesfelde* 1184) (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 214). It has a superb view over much of the Chilterns, the Thames and northern Berkshire to the south, including the beacon at Pangbourne twenty miles away Beaconsfield.

Fortifications

1. Burrow, Hambleden (*la Burgh* 1290) (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 177).
2. Loxboro, West Wycombe (*Lockesburwe* 1326) (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 208).
3. Desborough Castle (*Dusteburg* 1227) (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 207).
4. Tilbury, West Wycombe (*Tilleberie* 1086) (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 208).

Conclusion

The impressive early Norman church of St Bartholomew is one of the latest examples of a tower-nave in this study. It is unfortunate that Fingest only appears in the documentary record from 1163, although its probable early Norman date points towards construction by a royal or secular lord. St Bartholomew's lies in a manorial *curia* adjacent to its hundredal assembly-site. However, it is almost wilfully hidden in the landscape despite the presence of beacon-sites to the west and the Thames to the south. The tower therefore presumably was an architectural statement to the assembly-site, rather than being a regional landmark or watchtower.

Appendix I.12: St John's, Glastonbury Abbey, Somerset

Introduction

Glastonbury Abbey has been subjected to extensive excavations of varying quality throughout the 20th century (summarised in Rahtz 1993, 66-70), which are finally undergoing comprehensive publication (Gilchrist *et al.* 2008). On the west side of the abbey the remains of St John's chapel were uncovered in 1913; it seems to have taken the form of a turriform gatehouse with a chapel at first-floor level. Two important early sources for the interpretation of this structure are the *Vita Sancti Dunstani* (Stubbs 1874, 3-52), written by an anonymous priest around the turn of the millennium, and William of Malmesbury's later and generally less reliable *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesiae* of 1129-39 (Scott 1981).

Description

The history and development of the early medieval abbey is treated in detail by Rahtz (1993, 66-100). A monastic community was present by the late 7th century, when successive generations of royal patronage enriched the abbey and expanded its buildings. The earliest known church was the timber *vestusta ecclesia* ('Old Church') of St Mary, which survived until the fire that destroyed the abbey in 1184. An early stone hypogeum lay to the east. A larger stone church of St Peter was built and extended through the 8th century, linking the earlier structures together (fig. I.12.1).

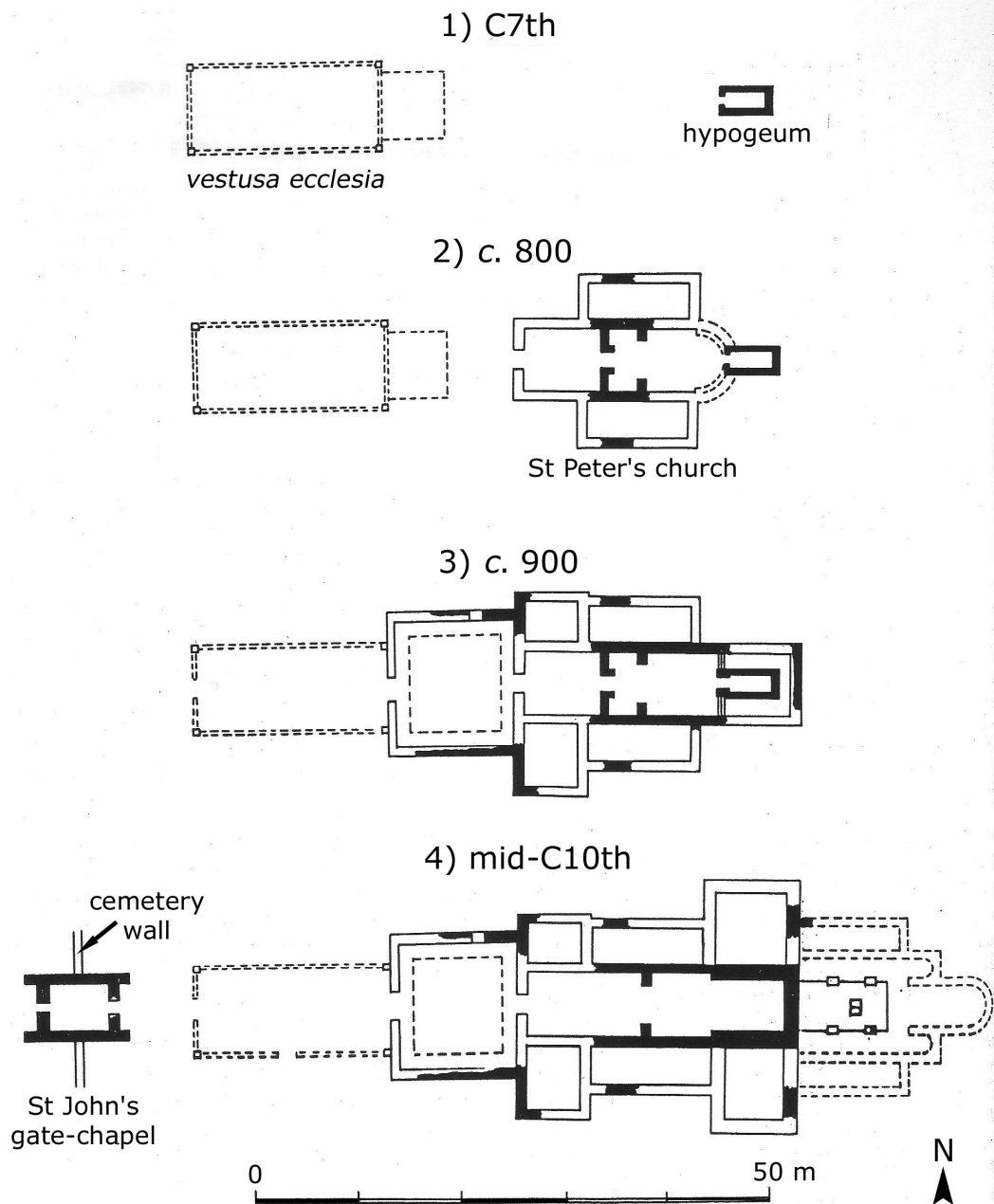


Fig. I.12.1 – Development of the early medieval abbey (modified from Radford 1981, 117-20).

The excavated chapel of St John

In 1913, Frederick Bligh Bond excavated the foundations of a structure aligned 7.5 m to the west of the *vetusta ecclesia* (fig. I.12.2). It measured 8.0 m east/west by 7.5 m north/south, with walls approximately 1.0 m thick. Its east and west elevations were flanked by buttresses which projected around a metre from the face of the building, which resemble the *antae* of many pre-Romanesque Irish churches (Radford 1981, 123). This may allude to the British or Irish roots of the abbey, and its claim to be the burial-place of St Patrick (Ó'Carragáin 2010, 88). The excavated foundations were of local Tor Burrs blue lias sandstone with two or three stepped footings on the north side. Its

eastern half was mostly robbed away. Inside the structure was a layer of hard pebble 'concrete', interpreted as a road-bed (Bond 1913).

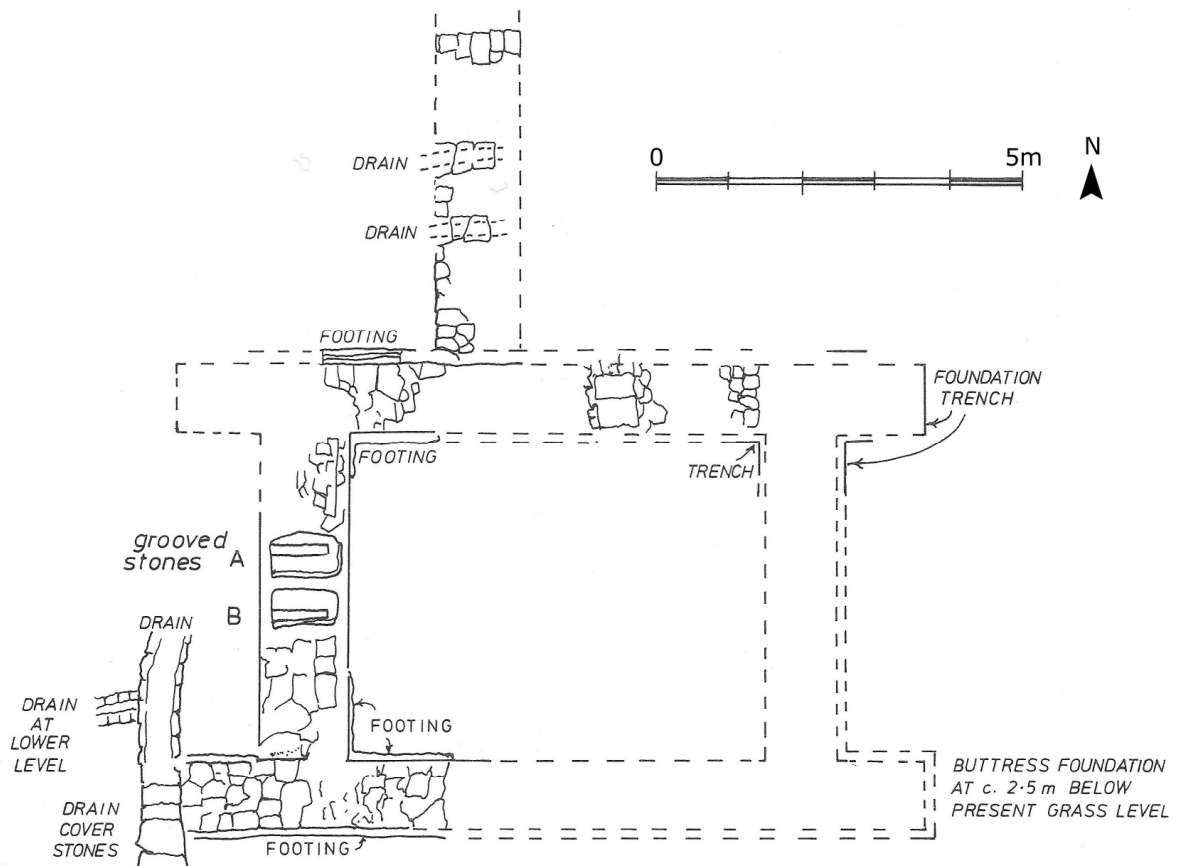


Fig. I.12.2 – The excavated foundations of St John's chapel (from Bond 1913, plate II). The stones marked 'A' and 'B' are shown in fig. I.12.3.

A pair of grooved stones were found below ground level approximately 1.00m apart in the west wall (fig. I.12.3), which were interpreted as slots for upright slabs of stone, possibly for an archway (Bond 1913, 60; Radford 1981, 123). A wall with drains at its base ran for at least 4.50 m from the north wall of the building (Radford 1981, 123).

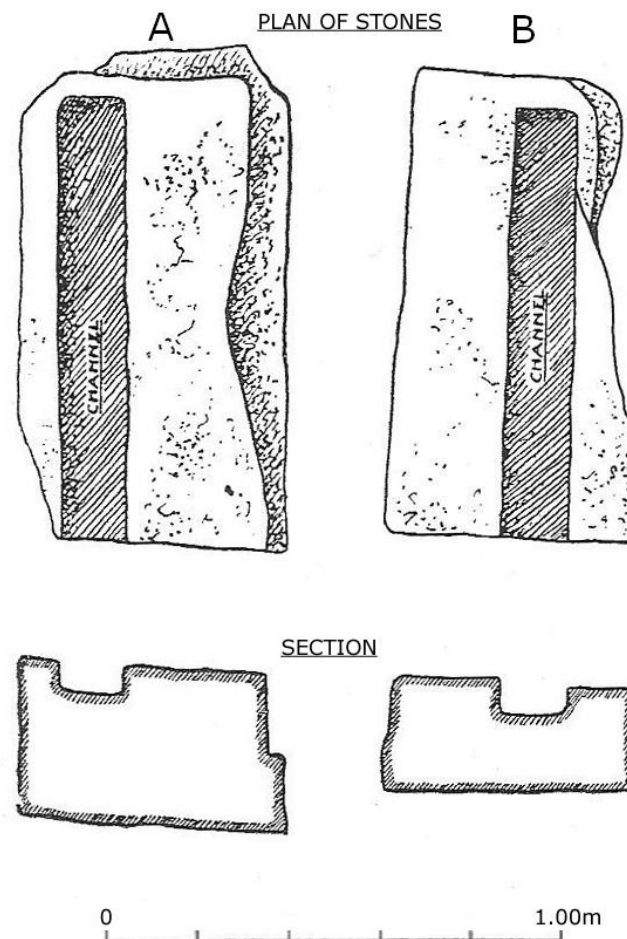


Fig. I.12.3 – The grooved stones flanking the entrance to the western chapel (marked on fig. I.12.2) (from Bond 1913, plate II).

Bond (1913, 60) initially interpreted the structure as a chapel constructed to hold the relics of St Dunstan, and dedicated to him. However, despite later claims to the contrary, Dunstan was buried in his cathedral at Canterbury (Thacker 1992). A more convincing identification of the structure can be found in the *Vita Dunstani* (c. 1000):

[Dunstan] built, on the west side of the Old Church, a church with four equal angles to serve as a little beacon and consecrated it in honour of John the Baptist.

Dehinc in eodem loco quadratum paribus angulis æcclesiam in modum facunculi construere juissit, et constructam in honorem almi Baptistæ Johannis honorifice consecravat.

(*Vita Sancti Dunstani* 35; Stubbs 1874, 48; trans. Radford 1981, 123-4).

Not only are the excavated remains in the correct location to be the chapel of St John, but the ‘four equal angles’ make sense as its *antæ* (Rahtz 1993, 77-9). A church of St John is also mentioned in an abbey charter of 1340, in a list which implies that it is in

the approximate location of the building excavated by Bond (discussed in Radford 1981, 123-4). It would therefore have been built in the years following Dunstan's restoration to the abbacy by Edgar in 959 (Brooks 1992, 21-2). Frustratingly, the chapel does not appear to be depicted on the abbey seal of 1171-8, the only known depiction of the abbey before it was destroyed by fire in 1184; the stylised nature of the image means that this should not be given undue importance (Watkin 1949).

Reconstruction of St John's chapel

St John's chapel is generally agreed to have been at least two stories in height, with an arched passageway at ground level and a chapel above (Radford 1981, 123; Rahtz 1993, 79; Gittos 2003, 92-3). It was located on the approach to the abbey churches from the focus of early medieval Glastonbury. The walls of the abbey's cemetery extended either side of St John's chapel, and a road surface was identified inside, implying that it acted as a gatehouse (fig. I.12.4).

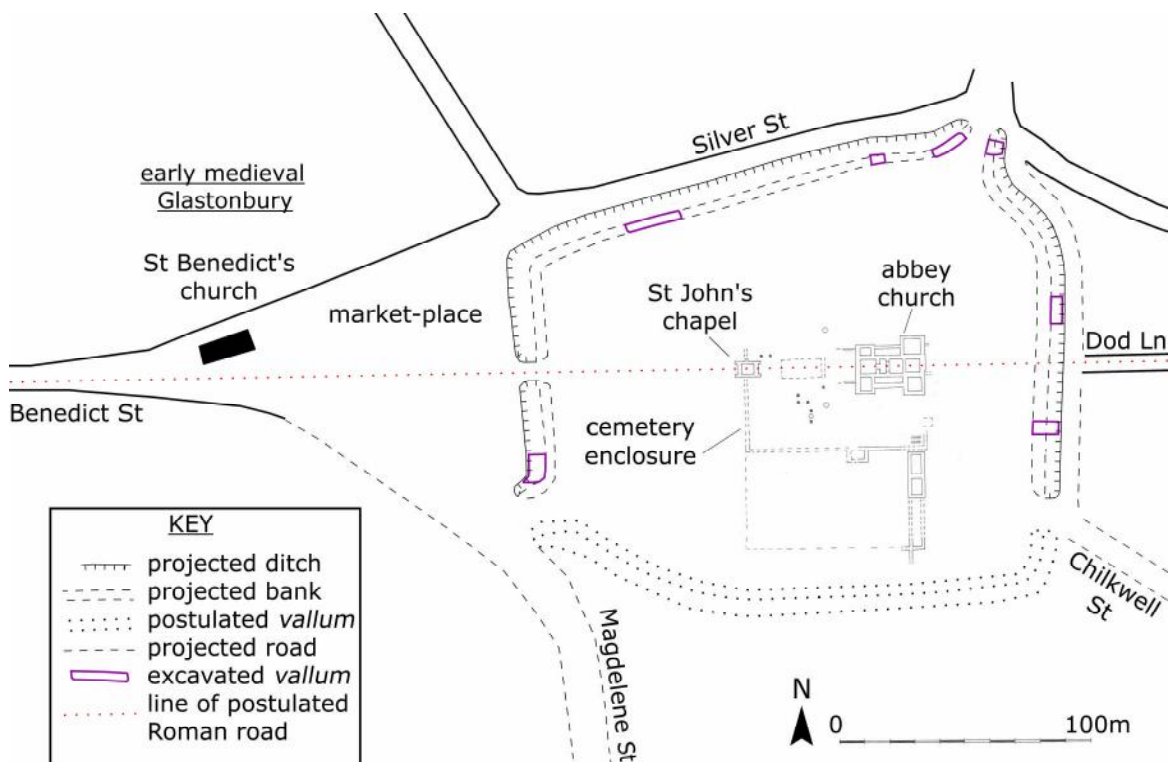


Fig. I.12.4 – Early medieval Glastonbury, based on Ellis (1982, 25), Rodwell (1984, 19) and Rahtz (1993, 70), with additional *vallum* excavation data from Hollinrake and Hollinrake (1992) and Woods (1994, 64-5).

The west entrance of the chapel may have been defined by the pair of grooved stones found during excavation (figs I.12.2 & I.12.3). Alternatively, the fact that their grooves do not extend their whole length may imply that they housed a pair of outward-opening gates, allowing for a wider entrance. The chapel's presumed eastern entrance did not

survive the robbing of the excavated foundations. Interestingly, the road surface of compacted gravel interpreted by Bond (1913, 60) as a road passing through the middle part of the building follows the course of a suggested Roman road (Rodwell 1984, 18-19). Unfortunately, the width and date of the excavated road-surface was not established.

The upper levels of the structure would presumably have housed the documented chapel of St John. The thickness of the foundations walls is consistent with this. Furthermore, the chapel's description in the *Vita Dunstani* as a *facunculi* ('little beacon'; Stubbs 1874, 48) implies that it was of some height. The chapel may therefore be the tower (*turrus*) that William of Malmesbury records Dunstan as constructing 'hard by' (*proxime*) his monastery (*Vita Dunstani* i. 26. 1; Winterbottom and Thomson 2002, 224-5).

The closest comparison for the chapel is suggested as the early 11th century monastic gatehouse of Glendalough (Co. Wicklow, Ireland; O'Keeffe 2003, 83-4). It is of stone construction with prominent *antae*, and consists of a passageway into the monastic *vallum* at ground-floor level with evidence for a chapel above (fig. I.12.5). O'Keeffe even speculates that it was a direct copy of the Glastonbury structure. The existence of such a good analogy for St John's chapel supports its interpretation as a turriform chapel-gateway.



Fig. I.12.5 – The early 11th century gatehouse of the 'monastic city' of Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. Note the *antae* flanking the entrance. The gatehouse is thought to have supported a first-floor chapel (O'Keeffe 2003, 84).

Interpretation

The town of Glastonbury

The town of Glastonbury grew up around the monastery. It remains little excavated, but judging by topographical evidence and contemporary analogy it seems to have been centred around a market-place adjacent to the church of St Benedict, which lay in alignment due west of the abbey church (fig. I.12.4) (Aston 1984, 178). The fact that Glastonbury does not appear separately as a town in the *Domesday Book* should not diminish its urban status since it always appears in medieval documents as subordinate to the abbey (Leach and Ellis 1993, 122). Subsequently, in the late 11th century, the focus of the town seems to have shifted to the north of the abbey precinct around the new church of St John (Leach and Ellis 1993, 122).

The abbey at the time of St Dunstan

Glastonbury abbey was granted to Dunstan by King Eadmund (939-46). Before this it was of no more than local importance as a minster church (Knowles 1963, 695-6). In a later account, William of Malmesbury emphasises the abbey's parlous state after the Viking raids of the 9th century (*Gesta Pontificum* 91; Winterbottom 2007, 308-9), although this may have been to exaggerate Dunstan's achievement. The early Norman *Vita Dunstani* (ch. 3; Stubbs 1874, 6-7) describes early 10th century Glastonbury as a 'royal island' (*insula regalia*), suggesting that the abbey was a minster at a royal *vill*: it may have reverted to royal control in the 9th century due to its inability to fulfil its military obligations (Fleming 1985, 251). King Eadmund's re-foundation of the abbey can therefore be seen as a continuation of the 'special relationship' that existed between the monastery and the House of Wessex (Abrams 1996, 7).

This 'special relationship' can be traced in much of the subsequent history of the late Anglo-Saxon abbey. Dunstan had been groomed for the abbacy at the royal court, and can be seen as Eadmund's agent (Brooks 1992, 6-11). Eadmund was buried at Glastonbury in 946, after which King Eadred (946-55) continued his brother's involvement at the abbey. He entrusted it with no less than the royal treasury, 'all the best of his goods, namely many title deeds and also the ancient treasures of preceding kings to be kept faithfully in the security (*munimine*) of his monastery (*Vita Dunstani* 19; Stubbs 1874, 29; my emphasis). Following a brief period of exile under King Eadwig (955-59), Dunstan was restored to the abbacy by Edgar (959-75) and given the bishopric of Worcester and the archbishopric of Canterbury. It was under the kingship of Edgar that Dunstan became instrumental in shaping the tenth-century Benedictine

Reform movement and the subsequent shape of English monasticism (Brooks 1992, 23). This is discussed in section 5.7 of this study, but suffice to say that the Reform placed the king at the centre of monastic patronage in England, the culmination of the work begun at Glastonbury by Dunstan and King Eadmund. King Edgar would be buried at the abbey in 975, followed by his grandson Edmund Ironside in 1016.

St John's gatehouse and Dunstan's demarcation of the abbey

Dunstan probably retained the abbacy of Glastonbury until the early 970s, during which time he seems to have retained close personal control of the house (Brooks 1992, 22). One of his prime concerns at the abbey seems to have been to emphatically protect and demarcate it from the outside world. According to the *Vita Dunstani*, immediately on becoming abbot:

...as a very prudent shepherd, he first fortified firmly the fences of the precincts on every side with monastic buildings and other defences.

*perprudens opilio primum scepta claustrorum monasticis ædificiis
cæterisque inmunitibus ex omni part firmiter munivit.*

(*Vita Dunstani* 15; Stubbs 1874, 25).

Glastonbury Abbey under Dunstan was a 'test-bed' for many of the Benedictine reforms that would have so much impact upon the English Church. These were set out in the *Regularis Concordia* (c. 970), penned largely by Dunstan whilst he was abbot of Glastonbury. The penultimate paragraph of its prologue states that the integrity of monastic space should be respected (Dales 1992, 54):

The brethren shall not go forth visiting the properties of the monastery unless either great necessity or reasonable discretion require it.

*Villarum autem circuitus, nisi necessitas magna compulerit et necessariae
rationis discretio hoc dictauerit, uagando nequaquam frequentent.*

(Symons 1953, 8).

During his abbacy, Dunstan constructed a walled cemetery enclosure around the abbey churches and a cloister to the south – one of the earliest known in England – into which the monks could withdraw for exercise and contemplation (Rahtz 1993, 91). He may also have overseen refurbishment of the abbey's precinct enclosure ('*vallum monasterii*') and the demarcation of its main landward approach with a linear earthwork

known as ‘Ponter’s Ball’ (see below). It is with this emphasis on monastic segregation from the world in mind that we can interpret Dunstan’s construction of St John’s gatehouse-chapel, which appears to have marked the entrance to the cemetery enclosure.

The cemetery enclosure

The abbey churches of St Mary and St Peter were surrounded by a walled cemetery (fig. I.12.4). William of Malmesbury records that:

The monk’s cemetery [Dunstan] enclosed with walling that extended many feet from the south wall of the church, raising its whole area into a mound revetted with the squared stone. The impression given is of a delightful meadow, free of the noise of any footstep. Truly it can be said of those who rest here in their holiness: ‘Their bodies are buried in peace.’

Cimiterium monachorum ab australi aecclesiae periete maceria in multos pedes protenta inclusit. Ipsum spatium quadratis lapidibus excitauit in tumulum, uideturque quasi pratum amenissimum ab omni ambulantium strepitu alienum, ut merito de sanctis ibi paasantibus dici queat: ‘Corpora eorum in pace sepulta sunt’.

(*Life of St Dunstan* i. 16. 2; Winterbottom and Thomson 2002, 204-6).

The ‘mound’ in this description probably refers to artificial terracing on the slope to the south of the abbey, with masonry retaining walls and a clay bank, excavated by Radford (1981, 123). This enclosure extended approximately 30 m to the south of St John’s chapel and 70 m east, as far as the east end of St Peter’s church. It may have had at least two further chapels along its length. A northern counterpart to the cemetery enclosure was found extending from the north side of St John’s chapel in 1913 (fig. I.12.2), and a number of undated burials were discovered to the north of the Old Church in the early nineteenth century (Bond 1926).

The vallum monasterii

The layout of Glastonbury’s monastic *vallum* at the time of the construction of St John’s chapel is imperfectly known (fig. I.12.4). Its eastern extent was located beneath the north transept and chapter house of the later medieval church. It had a bank 6.0 m wide and a ditch 2.5 m deep (Radford 1981). Further excavations took place on the north boundary of the abbey precinct in 1978, which uncovered a north/south ditch 5.0 m wide by 2.5 m deep with a truncated bank on its west side (Ellis 1982). A part of a second bank running east/west was excavated 5.0 m to the west. The remains were

interpreted as the northeast corner of the *vallum*, and as being of 7th or 8th century date. Their alignment and relationship to the route of the adjacent Silver Street was taken to imply the presence of an entrance in this location. To the west again a truncated bank running east/west and a ditch 2.0 m in depth and of unknown width was excavated in 1987, interpreted as a part of the northern section of the early *vallum* (Woods 1994, 64-5). The western extent of the *vallum* seems to have run along the line of Magdalene Street, where a north/south ditch 5.0-6.0 m wide and 3.0 m deep was found with a slight curve at the south end suggestive of an entranceway (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 1992). A second entranceway on this western side is suggested by the proximity of the early medieval town's market-place and by the possible presence of a Roman road along which the abbey churches are aligned (Rodwell 1984, 19). The southern extent of the *vallum* is known only by the negative evidence that the continuation of its eastern side was not found by Radford south of the later medieval chapter-house, approximately 50 m south of St Peter's church. However, since it would not have had sufficient space to encompass the 10th century cloister if it had run west from this location, this gap may instead represent another entranceway, perhaps for Chilkwell Street, which would have intersected with the enclosure here (Rodwell 1984, 19). Therefore, in the absence of any other evidence, the southern boundary of the early medieval *vallum* is assumed to have respected the presumed deviation of Magdalene Street as it turned into the market place.

Dating the *vallum* is problematic. Radford (1981) suggested his excavated eastern section dates to *c.* 700, but his evidence for this is unclear. Its date has therefore revised to a *terminus ante quem* of the early 12th century, the same date as the excavated part of the northern section, although both sections are believed to be earlier than this (Woods 1994, 64-5). This is supported by two timber stakes found in the northern section, interpreted as the remains of a palisade, which were radiocarbon dated to the 7th century (Ellis 1982). The western section also underwent radiocarbon dating, of a natural branch found in the primary silts at the base of the ditch from the Magdalene Street site. The two calibrated dates were 970-1230 AD and 780-1040 AD at 95% probability, which provides a late Anglo-Saxon *terminus ante quem* for the cutting of the ditch in this area. The excavators therefore suggested that the *vallum* was constructed during the rebuilding of the abbey under Dunstan (Dennison 1986, 151), although the replanning of Glastonbury under the Normans may also be a context for its construction (Leach and Ellis 1993, 122). However, since the branch only provides a *terminus ante quem*, the 7th century date recovered from the northern section of the *vallum* remains a possibility.

There is place-name evidence supporting an early date for the *vallum monasterii*. The earliest form of 'Glastonbury' is said to be *Ineswytrin*, 'Isle of Glass' (601), but this is only known from 12th century sources. More secure are the names *Glastingaea* (704), *Glastingei* (744), *Glestingaburg* (732-55), *Glæstingabyrig* (c. 1000) and *Glæstingeberia* (1086). Glastonbury also occurs as 'Glæstinga Byrig' in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 'A' for 688, which was written at the end of the 9th century. The '*Glæstinga*' element means 'the people of the place where woad grew': its ending changed from 'īeg' (island) to 'burh' (fortification) by the mid-8th century (Turner 1951, 116-7; Ekwall 1960, 198). It is possible that this name change occurred with the construction of a strong banked and ditched *vallum* enclosure around the abbey.

Ponter's Ball

Ponter's Ball is a substantial linear earthwork which stretches for c. 1 km along the causeway approaching Glastonbury from the Fosse Way to the east (fig. I.12.6). It marks the boundary of the abbey's home estate. Long thought to have been of Iron Age or early Christian origin, excavation has now dated it to between the 10th and 12th centuries (Rahtz 1993, 23-8), quite possibly to the resurgence of the Abbey under Dunstan.

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.12.6)

Glastonbury lies in the Somerset Levels on the gentle west slopes of Edmund Hill and Chalice Hill, with the great mass of Glastonbury Tor immediately to the east. The early medieval landscape of this part of Somerset effectively consisted of a series of islands rising out of the waterlogged alluvial floodplain of the Levels, which surrounded Glastonbury to the south, west and north, leaving only a neck of dry land to the east (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2007, 238-9). The early place-name evidence for Glastonbury as an island (see above) is borne out by its topography.

Communication routes

The most important places in the vicinity of Glastonbury were the royal *vills* at Somerton and Cheddar, and the rival ecclesiastical centre of Wells. The latter became an episcopal seat in the 10th century, and lies on a direct route five miles to the northeast. Somerton lies six miles to the south and was the chief royal vill of the shire. Its relative proximity and accessibility to Glastonbury has been taken to imply that the two sites, of long-standing secular and ecclesiastical importance respectively, were to

some extent symbiotic in the organisation of this part of early medieval Somerset (Costen 1988, 50). However, neither Somerton or Wells were intervisible with St John's chapel, although Cheddar would have been. A stone cross was placed on the summit of Glastonbury Tor in the late Anglo-Saxon period (Rahtz 1993, 51-65), which would have been a far greater symbol of the abbey in the landscape.

St John's chapel also had little intervisibility with the major roads in the locality. The key land route was the Fosse Way to Bath (M 5), which branched northwest to the ridgeway 1½ miles south of Street (M 51), where it went north via Street to Glastonbury (M 511). The place-name 'Street', from *Stræt* (Roman road), is attested from 725 onwards, which is good evidence of the continued use of this route (Ekwall 1960, 450). Traces of a well-made causeway have also been found (Margary 1973, 123-5). To the east of the abbey, along the neck of land guarded by Ponter's Ball, a road led back to the Fosse Way which was important enough to have had a stone bridge from at least the 10th century (S 236; Costen 1992, 26). Other probable long-distance routes are likely to have run between Wells, Glastonbury and Cheddar, and Margary 45b crossed the Fosse Way past Maesbury Castle. Margary 510 is the only major road which had intervisibility with the tower, as it approached the abbey from the Bristol Channel to the west. A *herepath* lay to the south of the abbey (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2007, 240-1), but again this area is not visible from St John's chapel.

St John's chapel would have had good intervisibility west along the River Brue, which was both tidal and navigable at least as far as Glastonbury in the early medieval period and flowed out into the Bristol Channel. Its importance to the abbey is indicated by the construction of a canal from the river to Glastonbury's pre-Conquest marketplace, probably during Dunstan's abbacy (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2007). The region's exceptionally watery landscape at this time would have meant that boats in general, and the Brue in particular, were exceptionally important for travel and communication. St John's chapel was visible along the Brue all the way from the Bristol Channel, and therefore with all long-distance traffic to the abbey from the west.

Assembly-sites

Somerset has yet to be covered by the *English Place-Name Society*. The assembly-places around Glastonbury are unknown.

Beacon sites

There were beacons in the vicinity of Glastonbury, but there is no evidence that it was early. St John's chapel had no sight of these beacons.

Fortifications

St John's chapel had no view over the known fortified places in the locality.

Estates

The core territory of Glastonbury was its Twelve Hides hundred, which encompassed Glastonbury itself and five other islands in the Somerset Levels (Dunning 2006, 2-3). Due to the regional topography, the Twelve Hides was not as strongly demarcated as, for example, the *Banleuca* of Bury St Edmunds [5], which was enclosed by an earthwork with standing crosses at its main entrances (Hart 1992, 59). The Ponter's Ball earthwork did, however, demarcate the Twelve Hides along the causeway to the abbey from the east. The abbey held a considerable amount of territory beyond the Twelve Hides, making it one of the wealthiest monasteries in Anglo-Saxon England by 1066 (mapped by Costen 1992, 32). St John's chapel would have made a poor landmark for these estates. The Tor itself, Glastonbury's ancient monastic centre, is a far better candidate. It is visible from a vast area, and bore a late Anglo-Saxon stone cross on its summit (Rahtz 1993, 51-65).

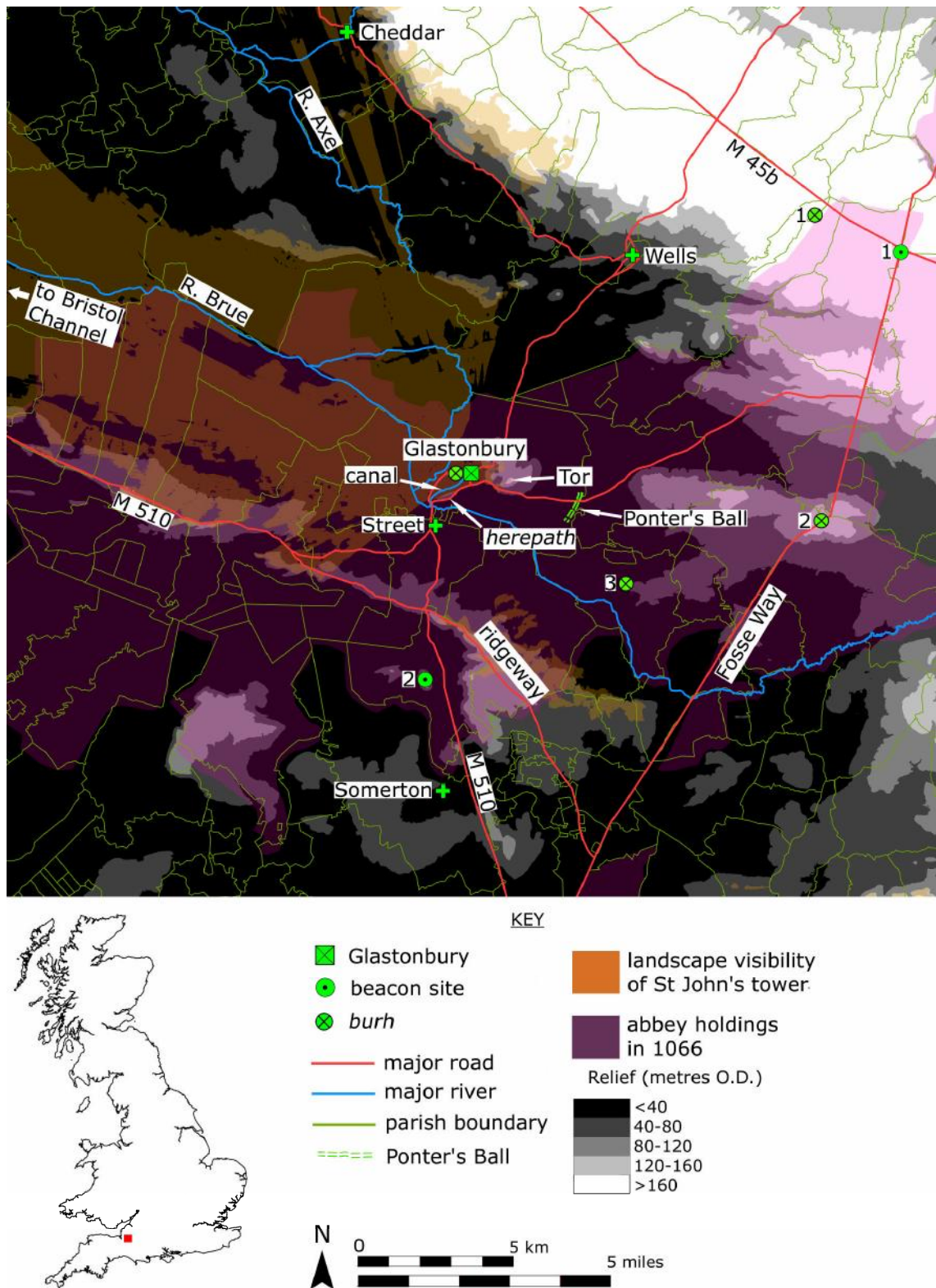


Fig. I.12.6 – The landscape context of St John's chapel, Glastonbury abbey

Key to fig. I.12.6

Fortifications

1. Maesbury Castle (*Merkesburi* 705) in Binegar (Ekwall 1960, 315).
2. *Cullanbeorh* (Culla's *burh* or *barrow*) is mentioned in the bounds of a charter of 955 (S 563), and is thought to have been on the edge of East Pennard (Grundy 1935, 65).
3. Baltonsborough (Bealdhere's *burh* 744) (Grundy 1935, 61).

Beacon sites

1. Beacon Hill.
2. Dundon Beacon.

Discussion: St John's chapel as a pilgrim beacon

St John's chapel was a turriform gate-chapel at the west entrance to the walled abbey cemetery. It seems to have framed the main route to the abbey churches, with which it was aligned. The cemetery enclosure was one of several increasing levels of sacred space demarcating the abbey: the home estate of the Twelve Hides with the Ponter's Ball earthwork; the Isle of Glastonbury itself; the monastic *vallum*; the cemetery enclosure; the monastic cloister. Then were the abbey churches: through the ancient timber structure of St Mary's, through a courtyard, then into St Peter's with its chancel and the underground hypogeum beyond (figs I.12.1 & I.12.4). Many of these were built or refurbished during the abbacy of Dunstan, as was St John's chapel.

The abbey was a representation of the City of God on earth, its congregation was the population of this Heavenly City, and the monastic *vallum* was the city wall. The abbey church was the royal basilica at the heart of the city, the House of God at the centre of Jerusalem. It was linked to the monastery entrance via the processional way, the *Via Sacra* from the basilica to the city gate. Glastonbury had such a route, a postulated Roman road along which its buildings were aligned. The entrance of the pre-Conquest *vallum* of Glastonbury has not been excavated, but St John's chapel acted as the ceremonial gate to the inner walled enclosure, on the line of the postulated Roman road. Its dedication echoes John 10:9: 'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture'.

The landscape context of St John's chapel (fig. I.12.6) supports the interpretation that it framed the monastery entrance. St John's would have been visible from many miles away, but only by traffic approaching Glastonbury by road or, especially, river from the west. The important southern road via Street linked with these routes a mile southwest of the abbey.

Once at Glastonbury, travellers would probably have gathered at the pilgrim station half a mile due west of the abbey, on The Mound (Carr 1985). This would have afforded a dramatic view to the abbey precinct. They would then have continued east along Benedict Street, the postulated Roman road, through the *vallum monasterii* up to the towering form of St John's chapel. All along the approach to the abbey from the west, St John's chapel would have marked the threshold past which the secular world

would truly have been left behind for the sanctity of the rebuilt and Reformed abbey of St Dunstan.

The contemporary description of the tower as a ‘little beacon’ is interesting in this context, since it suggests that it carried some flame or signal. This may have been a guide for the faithful to the abbey – the City of God – along Biblical lines:

Ye are the light of the world. A City that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

(Matthew 5: 14-16).

Some indication of this can be found in William of Malmesbury’s early 12th century *Life of St Benignus*. This describes the translation of the saint’s relics into Glastonbury abbey in the late Anglo-Saxon period; their arrival was heralded by ‘a column of light going right up to heaven above the saint’s chapel’ (*columpnam lucis in celum usque porrectam super oratorium sancti uiderunt*) (Winterbottom and Thomson 2002, 358-9). Whilst this cannot be identified with St John’s tower, it does give a context for the religious buildings of the Glastonbury region acting as prominent landmarks and using light for movement around this sacred landscape.

Conclusion

St John’s tower was constructed in the years after 959, when the abbey was undergoing Reform under Dunstan. It lay on axial alignment west of the abbey church and acted as the gate-tower to the walled cemetery, the inner of the abbey’s sacred enclosures. It may have acted as a mortuary chapel for the cemetery whose entrance it marked. Described as a ‘little beacon’, it would have made a poor territorial marker in the regional landscape but a superb guide and metaphorical gateway to the City of God to those approaching the abbey from the main route to the west. It was probably not a watchtower or a marker for the abbey’s estates in the landscape.

Appendix I.13: St Mary's, Guildford, Surrey

Introduction

The large church of St Mary (fig. I.13.1) is within the late Anglo-Saxon *burh* of Guildford, which lies in Surrey where the River Wey crosses the North Downs. The church sits on a steeply-sloping site on the east bank of the river, adjacent to the site of the ford that gave the town its name. The earliest part of the structure is the central crossing-tower, of accepted pre-Conquest date, the suggested remnant of a tower-nave church (Fisher 1962, 397; Cohen 2005, 6-7; Alexander 2009, 8).

In 1825 the church was shortened by 3.65 m to widen the adjacent Quarry St (Alexander 2009, 61). The church was restored in 1863 and much of its exterior flintwork replaced, except on the tower and the chancel. Drawings from this time comprise the first detailed record of the present structure (Alexander 2009, 44, 62). The first description of the fabric was published soon afterwards (Parker 1872), and others have followed (Baldwin Brown 1925, 455; Fisher 1962, 397-9; Taylor and Taylor 1965, 266-8). The only known excavations in the church were undertaken in 1966/7, covering part of the tower-space and a small area at the west end of the nave (Holling 1967). A standing building assessment report of the church, which did not include a measured survey, has since been undertaken (Cohen 2005). The recent guidebook is an unusually detailed summary of present knowledge (Alexander 2009).



Fig. I.13.1 – General view of St Mary's church from the east.

Description

The plan of the church (fig. I.13.2)

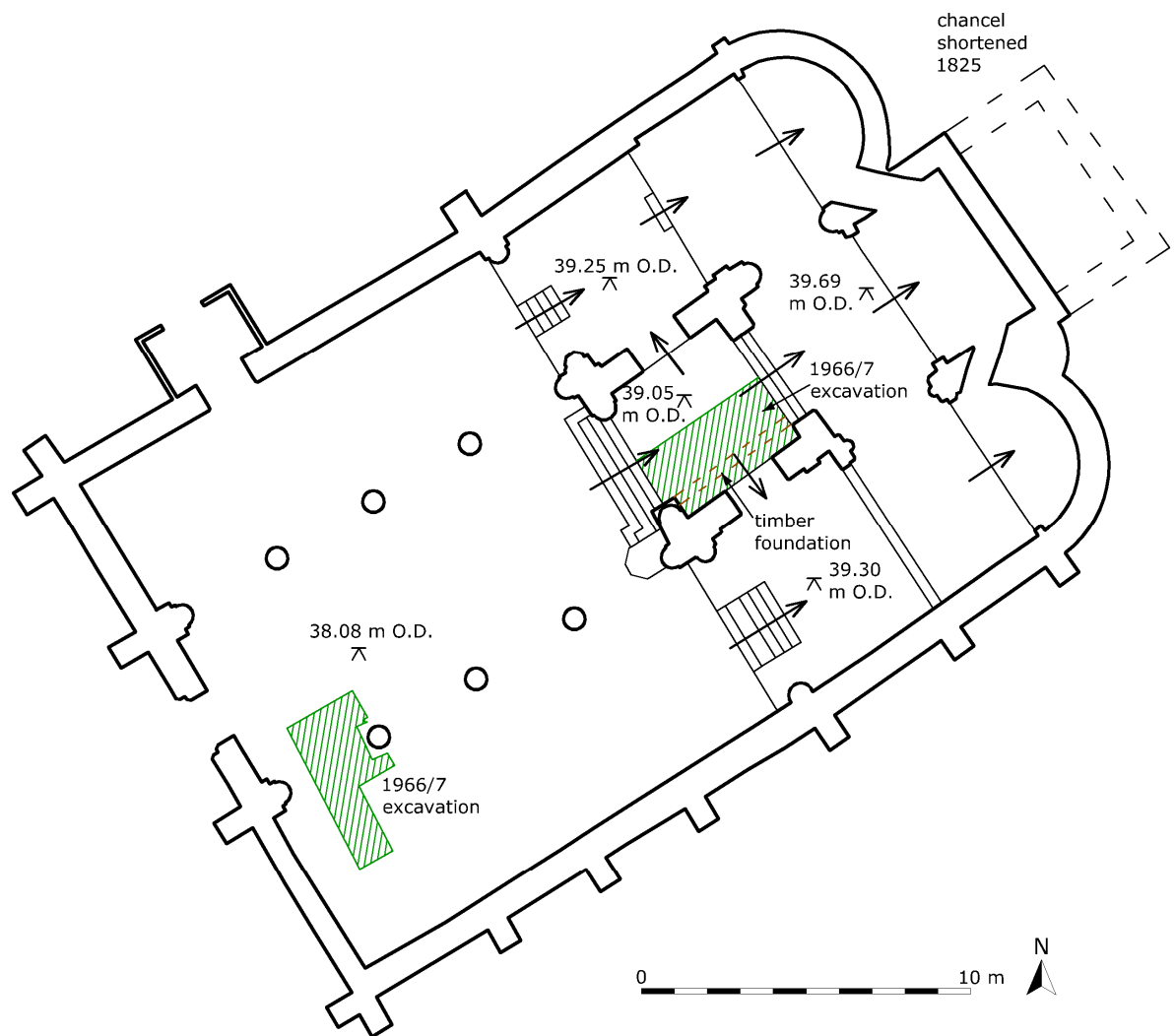


Fig. I.13.2 – Plan of St Mary's church. The 1966/7 excavation trenches are marked in green.

The church presently consists of an aisled nave, transepts, a north porch and a chancel flanked by apsidal chapels, giving it a near-rectangular footprint. They are out of alignment with the earlier crossing-tower. They are also at dramatically different floor-levels, meaning that the church abounds with steps. The chancel is out of alignment with the tower by two degrees, the nave by five degrees and the south transept by three degrees, whilst the north transept and the tower are perpendicular. The floor of the nave is 0.65 m below that of the tower-space; it slopes down to the west by a further 0.20 m. The floor of the chancel is 0.60 m above the tower floor, that of the north transept is 0.20 m higher, and that of the south transept is 0.25 m higher.

These discrepancies in floor-level are significant, and are original to the church. The 1966/7 excavations found the original nave floor just below the present paved

surface, and chalk bedrock only 0.40 m below the floor of the tower-space (Holling 1967). It seems clear that the church was built piecemeal around the tower on its difficult sloping site rather than being conceived as a congregational building from the start. This, together with the misalignments between the various elements of the structure, is useful supporting evidence that the tower was the primary building on the site.

The tower measures 6.0 m east/west by 6.2 m north/south, with walls 0.85 m thick. The tower-space connects with the church nave, chancel and transepts via later openings; those to the north and south cut through the original pilasters of the tower, implying that these elevations were originally external.

The external elevations of the tower

The tower is three stories in height, topped by a post-medieval parapet. All four elevations have pilasters. It has a pyramidal roof-structure whose timbers were probably replaced in the restoration of 1862. The restoration also involved the renewing of the stonework of the tower's windows, but the remainder of its fabric seems to have been spared (Alexander 2009). The tower is mainly constructed from flint and has no discernable quoins, except from a number made from presumably Roman tile towards the top of the tower. Tiles are also visible forming chequer pattern over upper parts of the tower.

The tower elevations are plastered at ground-floor level, both internally and externally, and internally in the first-floor chamber. The only visible parts of the tower fabric are the external elevations, which are all variously obscured by the roofs of the later elements of the church. The fabric of the internal elevations of the second-floor chamber – the present belfry – is partially visible, but the presence of the church bells and clock mechanism made detailed recording impossible.

North elevation (figs I.13.3- I.13.6)

At ground level, the original extent of the north wall of the tower is defined to the east by the truncated pilaster adjacent to the opening communicating St John's chapel to the chancel, and to the west by the engaged column communicating the north transept with the north aisle of the church. Both of these features are accompanied by a change in ground level. The visible part of the elevation is 5.40 m tall, and retains fragments of three of its original four pilasters. The fourth, easternmost, strip has become incorporated into the north wall of the later chancel. The central pair of strips are

truncated at a height of between 2.00 and 3.00 m by the archway cut through the north wall of the tower to communicate the tower-space with the north transept. It is 1.75 m wide and up to 2.85 m tall. It has dressed stone quoins with a slight chamfer, and a simple round head which springs from plain chamfered imposts. The termination of these imposts act as the springing-point for a simple chamfered hood-mould. The voussoirs of the archway are also chamfered.



Fig. I.13.3 – Lower third of the north elevation, from the present transept.

Above the archway is a double-splay window 0.95 m wide and up to 1.00 m tall, with a sill 3.25 m above the north transept floor. It narrows to an opening 0.30 m wide and 0.40 m tall. Although its sill is presently flat, it may have also been splayed prior to

the insertion of the archway. The window is contained between the central pair of pilasters and appears to be original to the tower.

The pilasters themselves, as is visible elsewhere in the tower, are constructed from flint rubble rather than being formed of dressed stone, as at Earls Barton [8] or Barton-upon-Humber [3]. They are 0.45-0.50 m wide at this level, narrowing to a width of 0.35 m towards the top of the elevation. They stand 0.13 m proud of the surface of the wall and terminate, apparently naturally, at a height of 12.60 m. They are spaced 1.05-1.25 m apart, and do not extend over the full width of the elevation.

Ten other examples of rubble pilaster strips survive from Anglo-Saxon architecture, mainly on towers. Of these, only at four other towers are the strips used to form decorative panels, as at Guildford, rather than simply being used to cover the junction between the tower and the nave (Taylor 1978, 916). Of these four towers, Haddiscoe Thorpe, Kirby Cane and Tasburgh are round towers within 15 miles of one another in Norfolk, whilst the fourth is the square tower of Holy Trinity, Colchester (Essex). However, the strips at Colchester and Tasburgh are perhaps better described as the piers of a blank arcade, whereas those at Kirby Cane extend to only around a metre above ground level. Haddiscoe Thorpe provides the best analogy for Guildford. These strips in all the above cases provide no structural benefit and are purely decorative (Taylor 1978, 918).



Fig. I.13.4 – The upper part of the north elevation

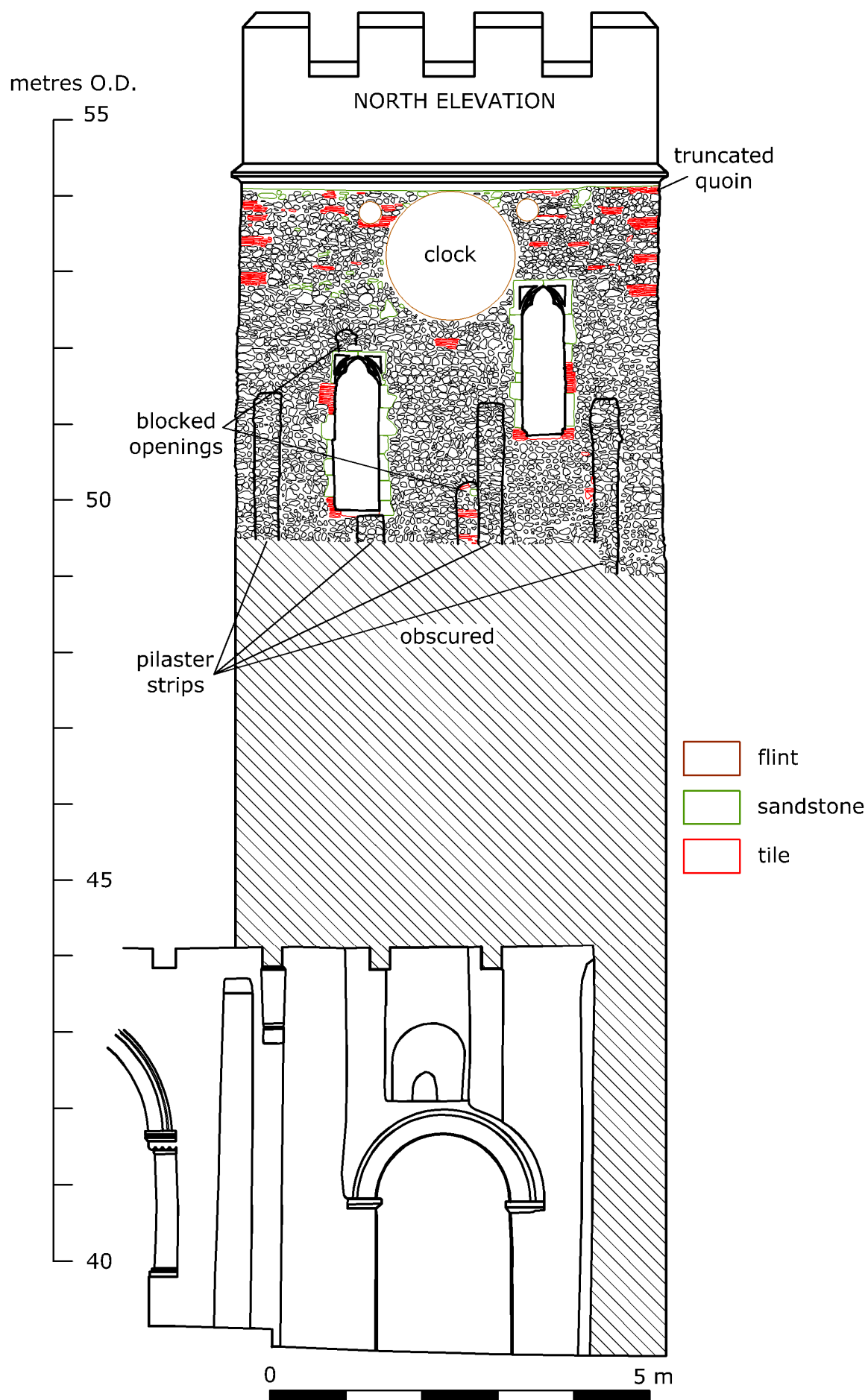


Fig. I.13.5 – Drawing of the north elevation of the tower

The middle *c.* 5.00 m of the north elevation, to approximately 10.50 m above ground level, was not visible for survey. Above this level the elevation extends to a height of 15.40 m to the top of the surviving medieval masonry. This is of uniform flint rubble with only occasional Roman tile up to a level of 13.90 m, above which the amount of tile significantly increases. This does not appear to be accompanied by a break in construction. The available Roman *spolia* is concentrated at the top of the tower where it is most visible: on other elevations it forms a chequer of tile and flint, which is much disturbed here. It is accompanied by quoins of Roman tile, which measure *c.* 0.35 by 0.15 m. Three survive on the tower's northeast corner, from a level of 14.00 m, and four on the tower's northwest corner, from a level of 13.90 m. The unequal number of tile quoins and their apparent truncation suggests that the tower does not survive to its full original height.

The elevation is pierced by a pair of apparently Decorated belfry-openings, which are round-headed Romanesque work internally. Two blocked openings are visible. The blocked opening in the centre of the elevation has a sill height of 10.70 m, is 0.80 m tall by 0.30 m wide and has a round head of flint rubble. There may have been a second opening adjacent, as on the south elevation, truncated by the later Decorated window. The upper part of the second blocked opening is visible above the eastern of the two Decorated openings, at a height of 13.25 m. It is 0.40 m wide and at least 0.30 m tall, with flint rubble voussoirs. Neither of the blocked openings are shown on the earliest depiction of the north face of the tower, dated 1861 (fig. I.13.6), suggesting that they were blocked in the pre-modern period, possibly with the insertion of the Decorated openings in the 14th century (Alexander 2009, 59).



Fig. I.13.6 – The church from the north in 1861 (Alexander 2009, 59).

East elevation (figs I.13.7- I.13.10)

At ground floor level, the east elevation retains no visible original features. It is partially obscured by the walls and vault of the western bay of the chancel, and is cut through by a large pointed chancel-arch.



Fig. I.13.7 – The east elevation viewed from the chancel roofspace

Above a height of 6.95 m, the elevation is visible from within the chancel roofspace, where it is obscured by plaster. In the centre a simple doorway to the first floor chamber of the tower has been inserted. It truncates the lower part of an earlier doorway or window, now blocked, at least 1.45 m tall by 0.60 m wide. Its quoins and voussoirs are of ashlar and its head is pointed, meaning that it is unlikely to be original to the tower: it may be the original doorway to the chancel roof-space.

All four of the elevation's pilasters are also visible: they are 0.40 m wide and spaced *c.* 0.90 m apart, and are offset as a group towards the north side of the elevation. They are abutted by the present chancel. One of the central pair of pilasters has been truncated but the others survive to floor level: their presence so low down the elevation means that the apex of the roof of any eastern structure original to the tower cannot have been higher than 8.25 m from the ground, even assuming the steep 55° pitch of the



Fig. I.13.8 – The upper part of the east elevation, from the east



Fig. I.13.9 – The upper part of the east elevation, from the northeast

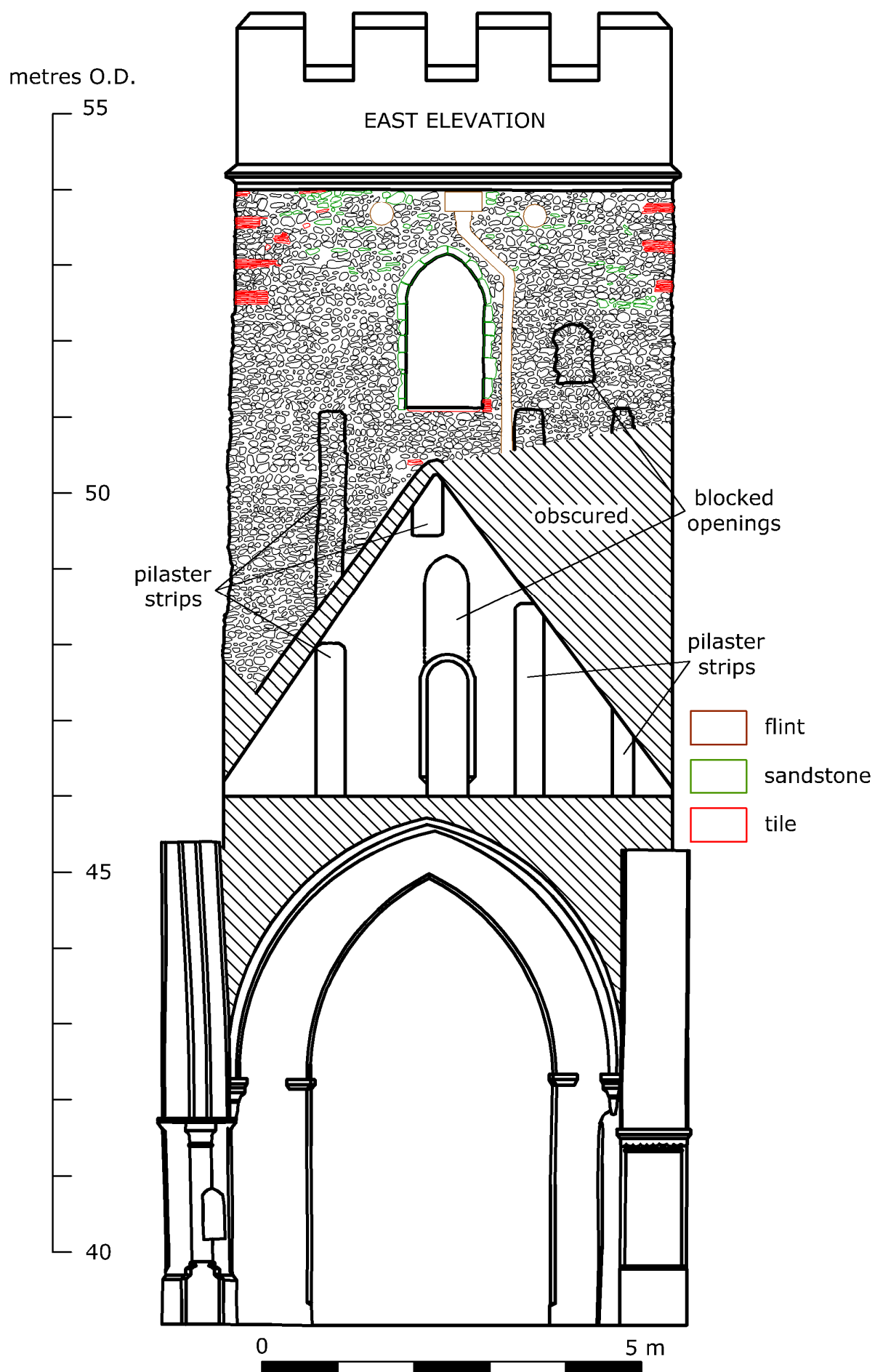


Fig. I.13.10 – Drawing of the east elevation of the tower

present chancel roof. Any former nave to the east of the tower would therefore have been exceptionally narrow or exceptionally squat, but there would have been room for a small chancel, for which no evidence survives.

The rest of the elevation is visible externally above the pitched chancel roof. Its original fabric survives to a height of 14.90 m and follows the other elevations in being constructed purely of rubble to a height of 13.35 m, above which there is the remains of a tile and flint chequer pattern. An apparently Early English belfry-opening dominates the elevation; it is of round-headed Romanesque work internally (fig. I.13.17). A second, blocked, opening may be visible to the north at a height of 12.40 m. It is approximately 0.75 m tall by 0.45 m wide, implying that it was double-splayed.

South elevation (figs I.13.11- I.13.13)

At ground level the south elevation is visible is partially obscured by the chancel and south transept. The remnants of all four of the tower's pilasters are visible, demonstrating that this was formerly an external wall. They are 0.45-0.55 m wide at this level, narrowing to 0.35 m towards the top of the elevation. They stand 0.15 m proud of the wall, are spaced 0.65-1.05 m apart, and terminate above the transept roof at a height of 12.35 m.



Fig. I.13.11 – The lower part of the south elevation of the tower, from the south transept

The inserted doorway communicating the tower-space with the south transept cuts the central pair of pilasters: it is of identical style to that in the corresponding position of the north elevation. It is 1.75 m wide by up to 3.10 m tall. Above is a double-splay window 3.35 m above the south transept floor. It is 0.85 m wide by 0.90 m tall, with an aperture 0.30 m by 0.50 m. It formerly bore a painting of Abraham in its splay, thought to be Anglo-Saxon in date, which was whitewashed in the 1890s (Alexander 2009, 9). The form and location of this window correspond to the similar example on the north elevation at this level. The Taylors (1965, 267) describe it as a later insertion truncating the easternmost pilaster of the elevation, but there is no evidence for this. The inserted south transept doorway is marginally taller than its northern counterpart, so the window may have been moved in an episode of rebuilding that resulted in the truncation of the eastern pilaster. Alternatively, the tower's original south external doorway may have been contained between the central pair of pilaster strips: this would be a typical location for the tower entrance, for which there is no other evidence. A third suggestion is that the offset position of the window represents an arrangement to accommodate an external wooden stair that accessed an above-ground main entrance for the tower (Cohen 2005, 6), potentially in the location of a disturbed area of masonry 10.50 m up in the centre of the west elevation.



Fig. I.13.12 – The upper part of the south elevation of the tower

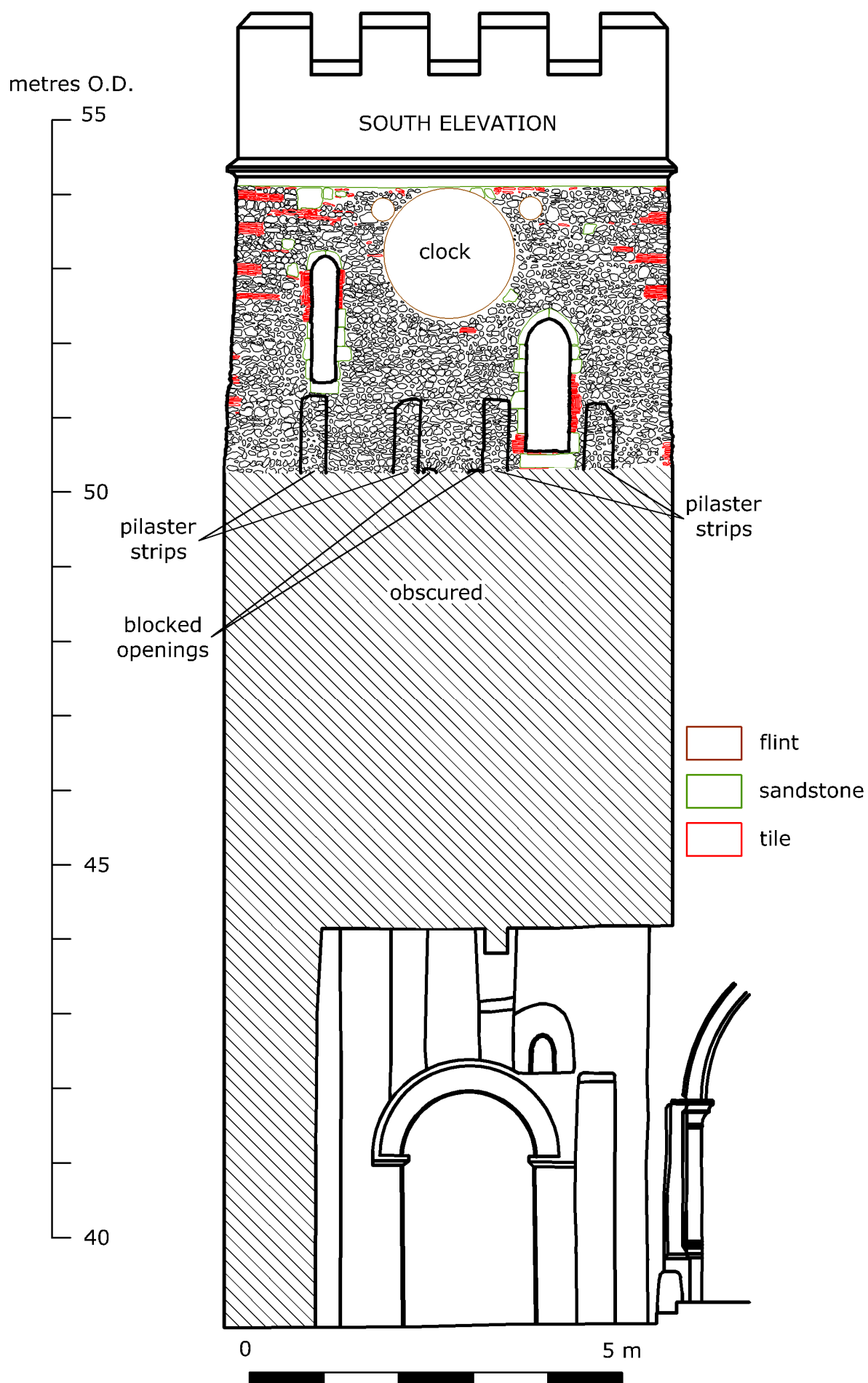


Fig. I.13.13 – Drawing of the south elevation of the tower

The middle *c.* 6.0 m of the elevation was not visible for survey. Above, the medieval masonry survives to a height of 15.25 m. As on the other elevations, this is of uniform flint rubble with occasional Roman tile, up to a level of 13.70 m, with the remains of tile and flint chequer above. It is pierced by a pair of apparently Early English openings, which are of rounded-headed Romanesque appearance internally (fig. I.13.17). There is a pair of narrow round-headed windows between the central pair of pilasters, now blocked. They are 0.35 m wide and have flint rubble voussoirs; they appear to have been *c.* 1.0 m tall.

West elevation (figs I.13.14- I.13.16)

At ground floor level, the west elevation retains no visible original features. It is partially obscured by the nave aisles and is cut by the large pointed tower-arch. Above is a 15th-century doorway associated with the former rood-screen (Alexander 2009, 34).



Fig. I.13.14 – The lower part of the west elevation, viewed from the nave

The upper half of the elevation is visible above the nave roof. Its fabric is of uniform flint rubble with occasional Roman tile. There is a disturbance in the fabric at the centre of the elevation, possibly associated with the removal of pilasters or with a former opening. An Early English belfry-opening lies above. Only the outer pair of the elevation's pilaster strips survive; they are 0.35 m wide and terminate at a height of 13.55 m. The chequer of tile and flint survives best on this elevation, at a height of 14.80 m.



Fig. I.13.15 – The upper part of the west elevation

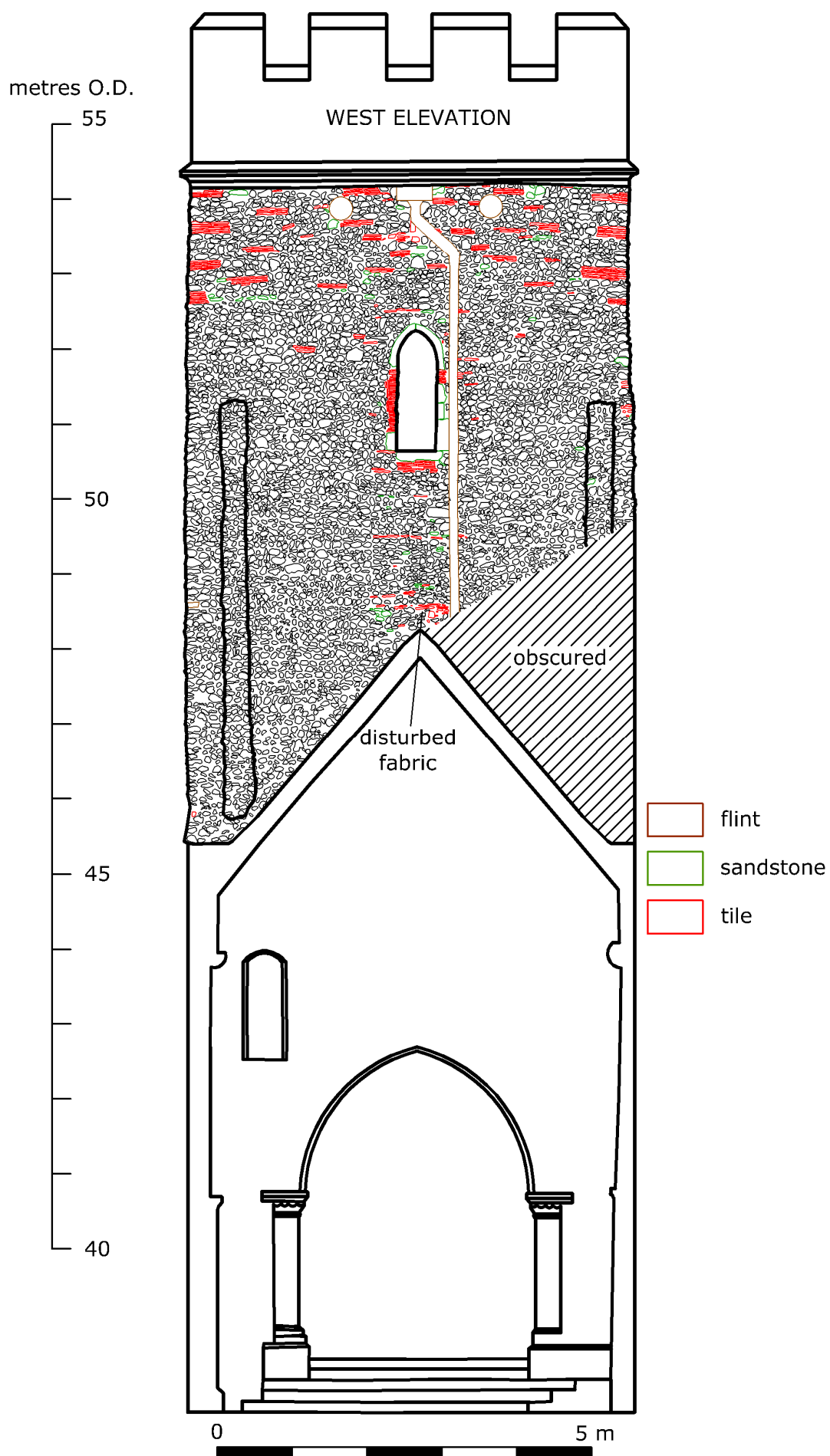


Fig. I.13.16 – Drawing of the west elevation of the tower

The internal elevations of the tower*Ground level*

At ground floor level, no original features are visible aside from the double-splay windows in the north and south walls already described. The flat ceiling is supported on stone corbels and appears to be a post-medieval restoration.

First-floor level

The first-floor chamber is plastered, but three early features are visible. In the east wall is the inserted doorway communicating the chamber with the roofspace above the chancel. At its foot is a massive timber beam, largely concealed behind matchboarding, that may mark the original floor height of the chamber. The beam itself is of obvious age, and certainly pre-dates the presumably Victorian floor of the chamber, visible from the ground floor. It is prime candidate for any future dendrochronological dating in the tower. The other visible timbers are associated a the bell-cage in the floor above.

Second floor level

The church bells and clock mechanism at this level make thorough description impractical. The visible fabric is of flint rubble, as seen externally, with several large areas of rebuilding in tile. The break in fabric where the upper part of the elevation bears a chequer effect is also visible. In the north elevation, the eastern of the pair of ostensibly Decorated windows seen externally at this level can be seen to have originally been round-headed with a slight splay; its dressed quoins and voussoirs give it the appearance of Norman work. The western of the pair has been extensively rebuilt. The windows in the east and south elevation were also originally of Norman appearance (fig. I.13.17).



Fig. I.13.17 – Inner faces of the tower's belfry-openings. **Left:** East elevation. **Right:** South elevation, western window.

At the north end of the west elevation there is a small round-headed blocked window, not visible externally, at the same approximate level at the present Early English opening (fig. I.13.18).



Fig. I.13.18 – Blocked window at the north end of the west elevation, at belfry level.

The rest of the church

The following is synthesised from Cohen (2005) and Alexander (2009). The church has a two-bay chancel with round-headed single-splay Norman windows that are of an earlier phase than its rib-vaulted ceiling. Its north and south walls contain round-headed angled doorways which communicate with chapels to the north and south. These chapels have apsidal ends and are of probable late 12th century date. It has been suggested that the chancel, which was shortened in 1825, also formerly had an apsidal end. To the north and south of the tower are early transepts which pre-date the construction of the chapels either side of the chancel. To the west of the tower lies the nave, of probable early twelfth-century origin. It seems to have been rebuilt at the end of the century, and gained aisles and entrances to the north and south in the thirteenth century. Further more minor works and alterations not relevant here occurred over the succeeding centuries.

Discussion

Building materials

The main material of the tower's construction is flint with occasional sandstone, both of which are available locally. The flint may have been quarried; the sparsity and irregular size of the sandstone implies that it was re-used from the same source as the Roman tile also present in the tower. There is little known Roman activity in the vicinity of Guildford, so this material would probably have been in short supply. It was therefore concentrated at the top of the tower where it would be most visible.

Building sequence

Phase 1

The first phase of construction on this site may have consisted of a timber church, the existence of which was rather presciently suggested as long ago as 1872 (Parker 1872, 170). Holling's (1967) excavation of the southern half of the tower-space uncovered chalk bedrock *c.* 0.40 m below present floor level. Into it was cut a single beam-slot 0.30 m wide running parallel with the south wall of the tower at a distance of 0.45 m. It continued underneath the west wall of the tower, and was interpreted as a fragment of the original timber church on the site. Although no dating evidence was uncovered from this feature, the fact that it aligns with the present tower may indicate that it was part of a preceding church rather than an unrelated structure.

Phase 2

The second phase of construction consists of the original tower, which is likely to have been a tower-nave (Fisher 1962, 397; Alexander 2009, 8; Cohen 2005, 6-7). The evidence for this is fivefold:

1. The tower is architecturally the oldest component of the church. This is not strong evidence in itself, but it supports the subsequent evidence.
2. The tower is significantly out of alignment with the rest of the church, implying that the structures were not conceived together. Even if the present post-Conquest nave and chancel are built on early foundations, these in turn are unlikely to be contemporary with the tower. The chancel is not only out of alignment but its south wall is significantly offset from the south wall of the tower, compounding the impression that the later church accreted around an existing tower.
3. The chancel is of early Norman construction (see below), making an Anglo-Saxon predecessor unlikely. Since the tower had probably been built only a few decades before, the pressing need for a new chancel to replace an earlier chancel for which there is no evidence, and to replace it on new alignment, seems unlikely.
4. The tower is on a significantly different level to the rest of the church, which communicates internally via an awkward arrangement of stairs. The church is on a difficult sloping site, unsuitable for a nave, which seems to have been added later. The pilasters on the west elevation of the tower preclude the existence of a nave originally.
5. The pilasters on the east elevation of the tower extend to 6.95 m above ground level. As discussed above, this would only have left room for a small chancel.

The tower's original entrance may have been in the centre of the south elevation, which has only two pilaster-strips. The belfry-openings at the summit of the tower may be Norman insertions. The topmost levels of the structure were decorated with a chequer of Roman tile and flint.

Interestingly, this initial phase of the tower lacks any evidence either for belfry-openings or a chancel, raising the possibility that it was a secular tower. Having said this, the truncation and rebuilding of its upper levels may have removed any trace of a former belfry. In the absence of strong evidence either way, a stone building that became used as a chapel soon after it was built must be assumed to have had a religious

function originally. Its prominent re-use of Roman material may also have been a clear embodiment of Roman Christianity.

Phase 3

The third phase of the church consists of the addition of a chancel to the existing tower, and probably the large round-headed openings in the north, east and south walls of the upper levels of the tower, potentially turning it into a belltower for the new eastern focus of liturgical activity. As discussed above, the form and alignment of the present chancel indicates that it was conceived subsequent to the tower's construction. The church transepts may have been added at this time, and doorways cut to communicate with the tower-space. Although the nave is stylistically later than the transept doorways, it was probably added at this time to form a conventional cruciform church. The differing alignments and floor levels of the church imply that the construction associated with phase three happened over a period of time.

Phase 4

The church continued to develop through the 12th century and beyond, as briefly outlined above. Relevant here is the rebuilding of the top levels of the original fabric of the tower, disturbing the decorative tile chequer and changing the form of the Romanesque windows. The fact that some of the tile ended up in the jambs of the rebuilt windows may date this event.

Dating

Opinion of the tower's date varies considerably. Parker (1872, 170-1) suggested an early Norman date, but did not substantiate this. The first stylistic date, of *c.* 950-1050, was offered by Baldwin Brown (1925, 455), in which he was followed by the Taylors (1965, 266-8). Fisher (1962, 397) refined this to the reign of Cnut, on unknown grounds.

The tower's pilasters and double-splay windows are good evidence for its Anglo-Saxon construction. Double-splay windows are generally late Anglo-Saxon, with few closely-dated examples (Taylor 1978, 861). The tower's pilasters find their best analogy on the tower at Haddiscoe Thorpe, most recently suggested as mid-late 11th century in date (Hart 2003, 169). The tower's convincingly Anglo-Saxon double-splay windows therefore suggest that it was constructed in the mid-11th century.

The 1966/7 excavation supports a mid-11th century date. A sherd of pottery of *c.* 1050-1150 and believed by the excavator not to be intrusive was found in the footings of the south wall of the tower (Holling 1967, 168). This provides a rough *terminus post quem* of *c.* 1050 for the construction of the tower, which broadly agrees with the architectural evidence already discussed, and with the conclusions of Cohen (2005, 6-7). This date is at odds with Alexander's (2006, 8; 2009, 8) suggestion that the stone tower was built as early as the mid-10th century, when Guildford was established as a *burh* under Æthelstan. The apparently free-standing nature of the tower would have precluded it from acting as a congregational church, removing any need to relate it to the growth of a new settlement.

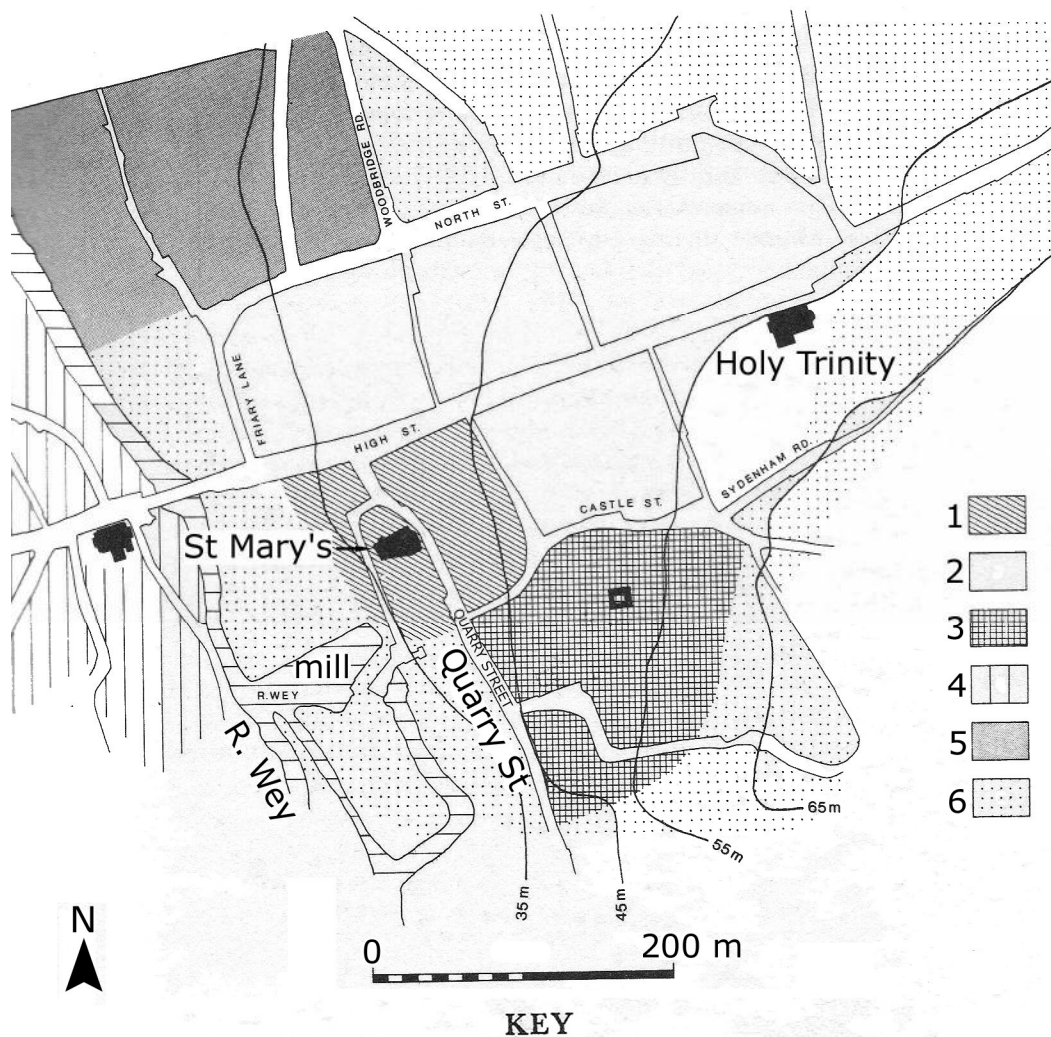
The subsequent development of the tower is firmly post-Conquest. The chancel dates to the late 10th century on the basis of the early Norman windows in its north and south walls. The doorways to the transepts are also early Norman in appearance. Although the earliest architecture in the nave is late 12th century, it is presumably broadly contemporary with the addition of the chancel and transepts. The suggestion that the church was expanded to a cruciform when it was granted to Merton Priory in 1120 seems sensible (Cohen 2005, 7).

Interpretation

The tower in context

Early medieval Guildford

The tower stands in the southwest corner of Anglo-Saxon Guildford, set back from the main east/west road through the settlement (fig. I.13.19). The road crosses the river Wey close to the tower at a ford which gave Guildford both its location and its name: it is first recorded in 880-885 as 'Gyldeforda', the first element perhaps referring to a golden-coloured plant next to the ford (Gover *et al.* 1934, 9-10). The planned Anglo-Saxon *burh* is of 10th century origin, possibly a replacement for the nearby *Burghal Hideage* fort of Eashing. This may have been intended as a short-lived fortification rather than a commercial centre, and was abandoned soon after Guildford was established (O'Connell and Poulton 1984, 42-6). There is no firm evidence for the date of this, although a *terminus ante quem* of 975-8 is provided by the earliest coins known to have been minted in Guildford: it was probably founded sometime in the first half of the 10th century (O'Connell and Poulton 1984, 46; Alexander 2006, 8).



KEY

- 1. = Primary settlement around St Mary's church
- 2. = Area of late Saxon planned town
- 3. = Area of Norman castle
- 4. = Suburb of St Nicholas (13th century and later)
- 5. = Precinct of Dominican friary (founded c. 1275)
- 6. = Area of principally post-medieval development

Fig. I.13.19 – Interpretation of the plan of Guildford (from O'Connell and Poulton 1984, 45).

Guildford was an important place prior to its institution as a *burh*. From as early as the 5th century there was cemetery at adjacent Guilddown, which lies on high ground a short distance to the west of the ford (Lowther 1931; Morris 1959, 142) (fig. I.13.20). The location of its corresponding settlement has been suggested as Quarry St, the nearest dry land to the ford that gave the settlement its name (Alexander 2006, 2). However, the cemetery lay on the boundary between the Saxon tribal regions of Woking and Godalming (fig. I.13.21) (Blair 1991, 13), which implies that it was a liminal place at this time.

Further argument against Guildford being a middle-Saxon central place is the apparent absence there of an minster church. The timber predecessor to St Mary's tower

is an unlikely candidate, since the church had a tiny parish and was not the chief church even of the 10th century *burh*. This was Holy Trinity, at the east end of the town, which is unlikely to have risen to primacy if an existing minster-church of ancient origin had been serving the settlement. The best candidate for a nearby minster is the locally-important church at Stoke, to the north of the town, which by Domesday stood on a royal manor and was farmed separately with half a hide, an indication of minster-status. However, there is no evidence for the church having had any rights over neighbouring churches, and it is most likely to have been a late foundation (Blair 1991, 97). The evidence for early misters at Godalming and Woking is much better (discussed in Blair 1991, 95-9). This supports the impression that these were the chief places of western Surrey, and that Guildford was a liminal place until the later Anglo-Saxon period.

A high-status residence in Guildford

Guildford is first mentioned in the will of King Alfred (872 x 888), who left his estate in that place to his brother's son Æthelwold (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 173-78). Guildford seems to have been a royal manor rather than a population centre, something supported by analysis of the town plan (fig. I.13.19). The area around St Mary's is visible on the earliest plan of the town (1739) as being out of alignment with the planned grid of the tenth-century *burh*. It appears to site within a distinct *curia* bounded to the north by the High Street, to the east by Black Horse Lane and to the south by Castle Street; its western extent was defined by the River Wey. It measures approximately 120 m north/south by 180 m east/west, and appears to pre-date the 10th century planning of the *burh*. It has been suggested that this area represents the royal residence referred to in Alfred's will (Poulton 1987, 208), which implies that any predecessor to St Mary's tower was the private chapel of a high-status residence rather than the congregational church of a settlement (Cohen 2005, 6-7).

Later evidence for a high-status residence in Guildford is contained within the 'C' and 'D' manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 1036 (Swanton 1996, 158-61). It recounts how Alfred the Ætheling, son of king Æthelred, came to visit his mother at Winchester, but was prevented from doing so by Earl Godwine, who captured him and killed his companions. The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* (written 1041/2) expands upon these events: Alfred and his retinue were taken by Earl Godwin to the town (*villa*) of Guildford where they were entertained, after which the Earl withdrew to his lodging (*hospicia*) (Campbell 1949, 42-3). This tells us that Guildford retained a high-status residence which included a space large enough for feasting, presumably a hall, and a

separate chamber-block. This residence may well have been located in the high-status *curia* around St Mary's church.

Early Norman Guildford

Guildford appears in the *Domesday Book* as the county town of Surrey with a population of perhaps 750 people (Lloyd 1962):

In Guildford King William has 75 closes in which dwell 175 men. *TRE* it rendered £18.0s.3d; now it is valued at £30, and yet it renders £32.

(Williams and Martin 2002, 71).

A number of other noblemen, including the sheriff and the reeve of the bishop of Bayeux, had houses and closes in the town by 1086, but the king held the lion's share (Williams and Martin 2002, 71, 83). Interestingly, the Godwine clan seems to have held no lands there, despite their residence in the town during the events of 1036: presumably this had passed to Harold Godwineson, and thence to King William. The royal domination of Guildford was cemented by the foundation of a castle in the early Norman period, adjacent to the presumed site of the old royal residence around St Mary's church.

The king also held Stoke, which survives as a district on the northeast side of the medieval town:

The king holds in demesne Stoke [in Guildford]. It was [part] of King Edward's farm. It was then assessed at 17 hides. They have paid no geld. There is land for 16 ploughs. In demesne are 2 ploughs; and 24 villans and 10 bordars with 20 ploughs. There is a church which William holds of the king, with half a hide in alms. There are 5 slaves, and 2 mills rendering 25s, and 16 acres of meadow. [There is] woodland for 40 pigs, and this is in the king's park. *TRE*, and afterwards, it was worth £12; now £15, yet he who holds it pays £15 by weight. The sheriff has 25s.

(Williams and Martin 2002, 71-2).

This passage sheds further light on the royal administration of 11th century Guildford. Stoke was not confined to the northeast side of town, the site of the church mentioned in this passage. The manor also consisted of two mills, and woodland 'in the king's park' (*in parco Regis*). Remarkably, there was a royal hunting park on the west side of the river crossing into Guildford (fig. I.13.20). It was particularly associated with the Norman castle, and survived as a royal park into the early modern period, but is

nevertheless a fine example of an Anglo-Saxon royal park of a type traditionally associated with the post-Conquest period (Liddiard 2003). This is in keeping with the place-name ‘Stoke’ (*Stochæ* 1086), which implies a defensive place guarding the approach to Guildford’s river crossing. It contains Stoughton (*Stoctune* 12th century), which may be from *stocctūn*, ‘stump-enclosure’ (Gover *et al.* 1934, 150-1). The royal park may even have its roots in Alfred’s 9th century residence in Guildford (Richardson 2007, 33): its potential symbolic significance is discussed in section 6.10.2. Finally, one of Stoke’s two mills may have been located adjacent to St Mary’s church (fig. I.13.19), which was the site of Guildford’s mill in the town map of 1739.¹

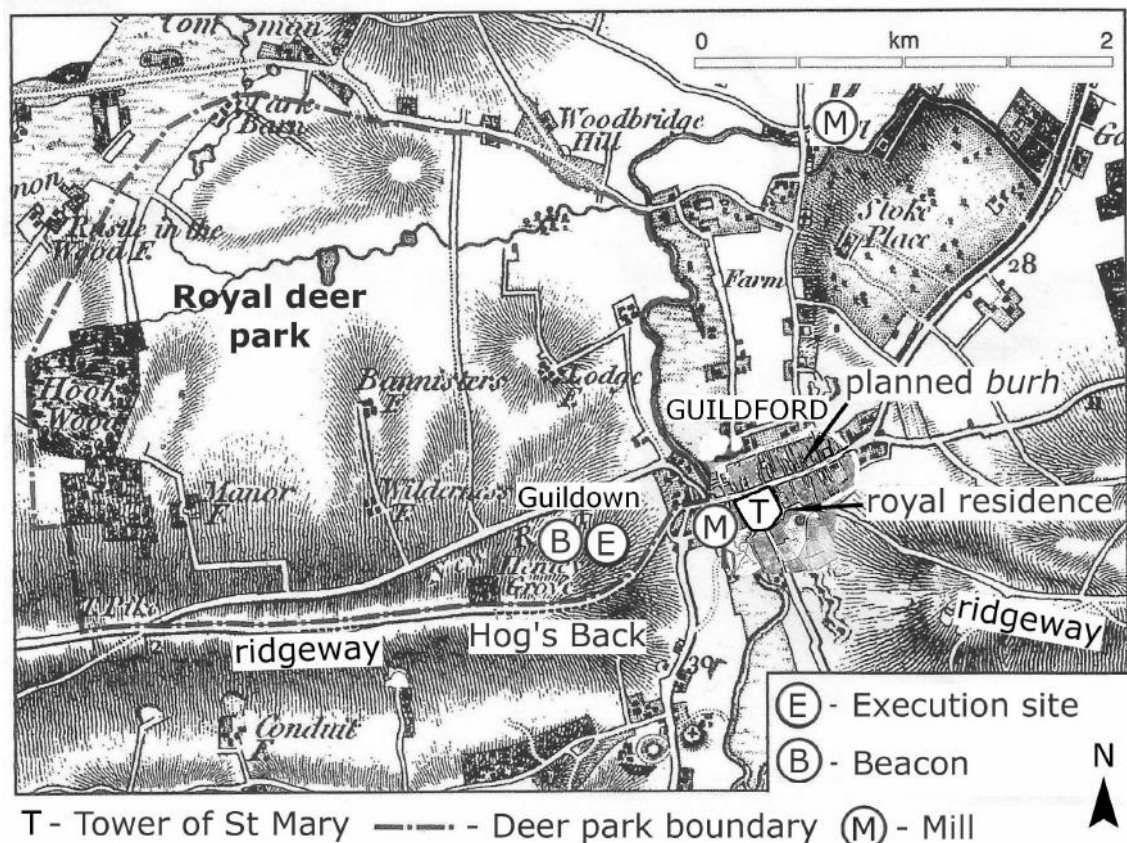


Fig. I.13.20 – The immediate landscape context of Guildford, based on the 1st edition OS map of 1811 (modified from Poulton 2005, 2).

The tower in its landscape (fig. I.13.21)

Communication routes

Guildford stands in a strategic place in the North Downs, guarding the gap where the River Wey crosses the Hog’s Back ridge. The ridgeway was a major early medieval route from Somerset to London (Alexander 2006, 1-2). All the important roads in the western half of Surrey converged to the crossing at Guildford until the early modern period (Poulton 1998, 2). A road ran southwest to Godalming, an early tribal capital

¹ Map on display in Guildford Museum.

(Blair 1991, 13), later one Surrey's few known Anglo-Saxon mercantile settlements (O'Connell and Poulton 1984, 46). A second road running south from the ford was Quarry Street, on the east side of the river, which communicated with the Weald and the south coast. Although map evidence for it does not appear until the 18th century (Poulton 1998, 2), it is clear from the town plan that it was the principle route south from the Anglo-Saxon *burh*. To the northeast ran the main road to Staines, Kingston-upon-Thames and Southwark, all important late Anglo-Saxon settlements and strategic Thames crossings (O'Connell and Poulton 1984). This route also ran via Woking, the second early tribal capital in the region (Blair 1991, 13). A Roman road (M 151) from Stane Street in the south (M 15) to the London-Silchester road in the north (M 4) may also have been in use: Blackheath Hundred the assembled along its route (see below). The rivers in the locality are not thought to have been navigable (Blair 2007, 18).

St Mary's tower would have made a poor watchtower over these routes, especially given the close proximity of prominent high ground. It was, however, visible from the south for four miles, and would have marked the main approach to Guildford from this direction.

Assembly-sites

Guildford sits at the intersection of the hundreds of Woking, Blackheath and Godalming, but it is unclear to which it belonged. The assembly-places of neither Woking nor Blackheath were in the vicinity of Guildford, and there is no intervisibility between them and St Mary's tower. The assembly-place of Godalming is unknown (Gover *et al.* 1934, 184).

One centre of political power adjacent to Guildford was Guildown cemetery. By the 11th century it was an execution cemetery: the proximity of judicial and administrative power may even have been the reason for the urbanisation of Guildford in the first place (Reynolds 2009a, 57-8, 242-3). It was intervisible with St Mary's tower; it would have been a powerful manifestation of royal authority, potentially like the tower itself.

Beacon sites

St Mary's tower could have articulated with the wider landscape through a significant regional beacon-system. This would have been a further indication of royal authority and military power over the region, but it would have been visible from the town without ascending St Mary's tower.

Estates

St Mary's tower was probably constructed by the king, but the Godwines or one of the other Anglo-Saxon noble families with a residence in Guildford may also have been responsible. The tower would have made a poor territorial marker whoever built it.

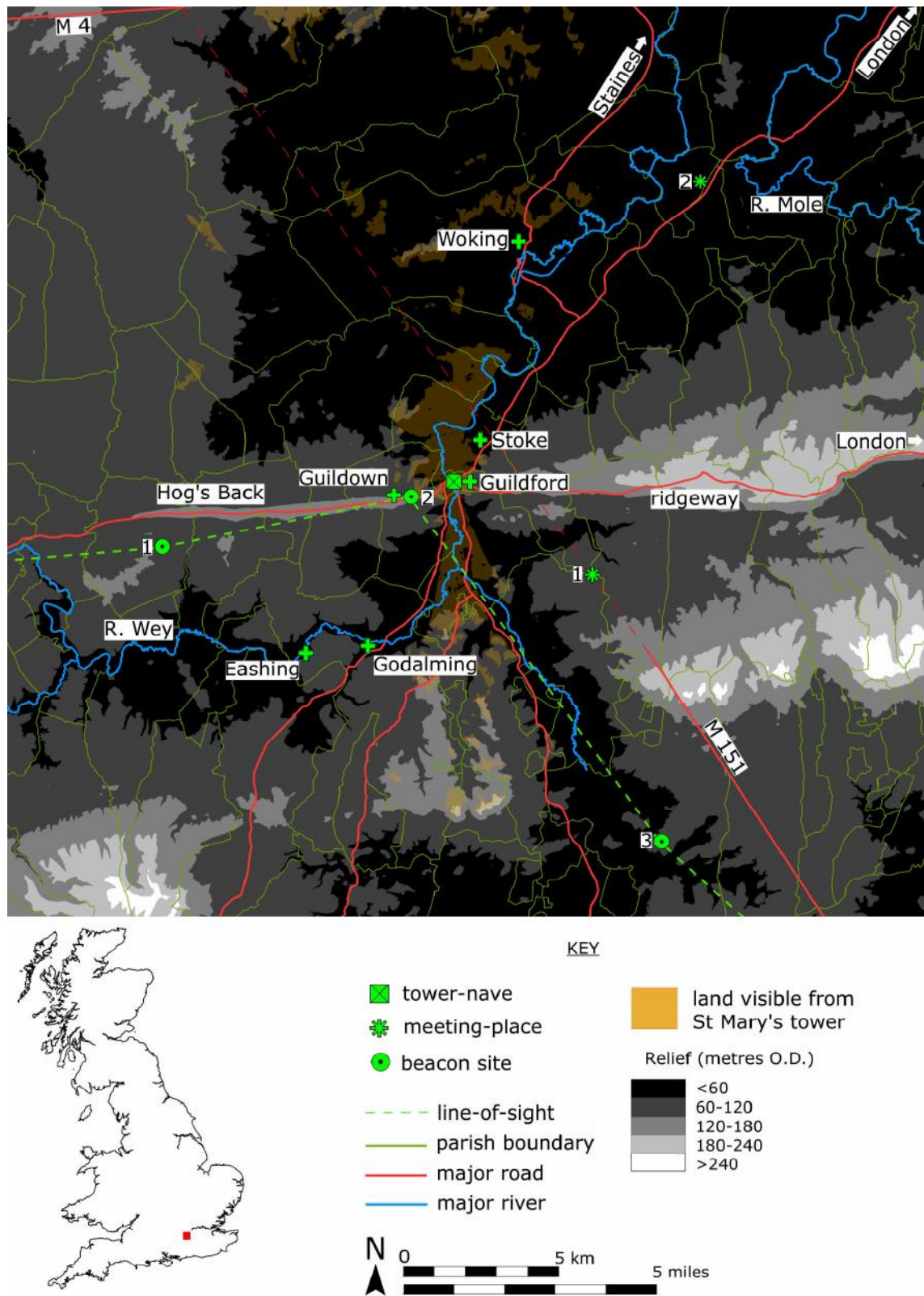


Fig. I.13.21 – The wider landscape context of Guildford

Key to fig. I.13.21*Assembly-sites*

1. Blackheath hundred assembled in Wonnesh (Gover *et al.* 1934, 219), probably on Blackheath itself, at the junction between the three parishes of St Martha, Albury and Wonnesh, on the presumed course of a Roman road (M 151).
2. Woking hundred assembled at Harmes Hatch, thought to be on the north edge of the hundred between Ockham and Cobham (Malden 1911, 399; Gover *et al.* 1934, 135). In the northeast of Ockham is Cockcrow Hill, near the junction of four other parishes and a 'Hatchford Wood'. A burial-mound atop the hill is a candidate for the exact place.

Beacon sites

1. Totford Wood (*ottan forda* c. 1150), Seale (Gover *et al.* 1934, 182). This was still an active beacon in 1619 (Kitchen 1987, 104). It would have linked with the Anglo-Saxon beacon system identified by Hill and Sharp (1997).
2. A beacon is recorded at Guildown c. 1550 (Kitchen 1987, 107). Its location linking the two early beacon systems through Seale and Cranleigh is persuasive circumstantial evidence that this was also an early beacon site.
3. Tothill wood (*Totehill Wood* 1749), Cranleigh (Gover *et al.* 1934, 234) was a link in an Anglo-Saxon beacon-system along Stane Street between Chichester and London (Gower 2002).

Conclusion

St Mary's was constructed as tower-nave church in the mid-11th century. It stands in a probable high-status enclosure, a royal residence from at least the 9th century. An Anglo-Saxon royal park and an execution site lay adjacent. The tower stands in a strategic place, adjacent to a ford at which most of the major routes of western Surrey converged. It would have made a poor watchtower, but it did have sight of an adjacent link in an extensive early medieval beacon-system. No known hundred meeting-places are in the vicinity. The tower was prominent in what became the chief town of Surrey by the 11th century, and stood at a centre of power in the regional landscape.

Appendix I.14: St Mary's, Hastings, Sussex

Introduction

Construction of Hastings castle begun on the site of an Iron Age hillfort in the days between the landing of Duke William's army at Pevensey on the 28th September and the battle at Senlac Hill on October 14th. A. J. Taylor (1966) suggested that the free-standing tower visible on the Bayeux Tapestry adjacent to the castle motte represented the church of St Mary, which lies within the castle (figs I.14.1 & I.14.12). The identification of the Tapestry's *Hestinga Ceastra* with what is now Hastings castle has since been questioned (Combes and Lyne 1995); this point is discussed below. Nevertheless, there is good structural and documentary evidence for a tower-nave at Hastings castle even if the evidence of the Tapestry is disregarded.



Fig. I.14.1 – General view of St Mary's, looking west from the castle motte

Description

The structural evidence

The church and castle were excavated in 1824 (Dawson 1909, 505-9). The only significant modern archaeological investigation of the castle occurred in 1968, concentrating on the castle motte (Barker and Barton 1977). A limited excavation also occurred in the southeast part of the castle in 1989 (Pontin 1989). Neither touched on the complex structural history of St Mary's church. The 1824 excavations at the castle

were little more than site-clearance and no finds were recovered or structural relationships noted. They did, however, reveal the plan of the church: it presently consists of a large nave with a south aisle and later western towers, a central tower with a stair-turret on its northern side, a transept to the south and a long square-ended chancel to the east (fig. I.14.2). A complex of later rooms lies on the church's northeast side. The most complete and informative of the church's surviving elevations – the west-facing external wall of the central tower – has been fully recorded in order to establish the relationship between the central tower and the rest of the structure (fig. I.14.10). A new plan of the church has also been made (fig. I.14.2) due to discrepancies between those of Dawson (1909, 495) and Barker and Barton (1977, 82).

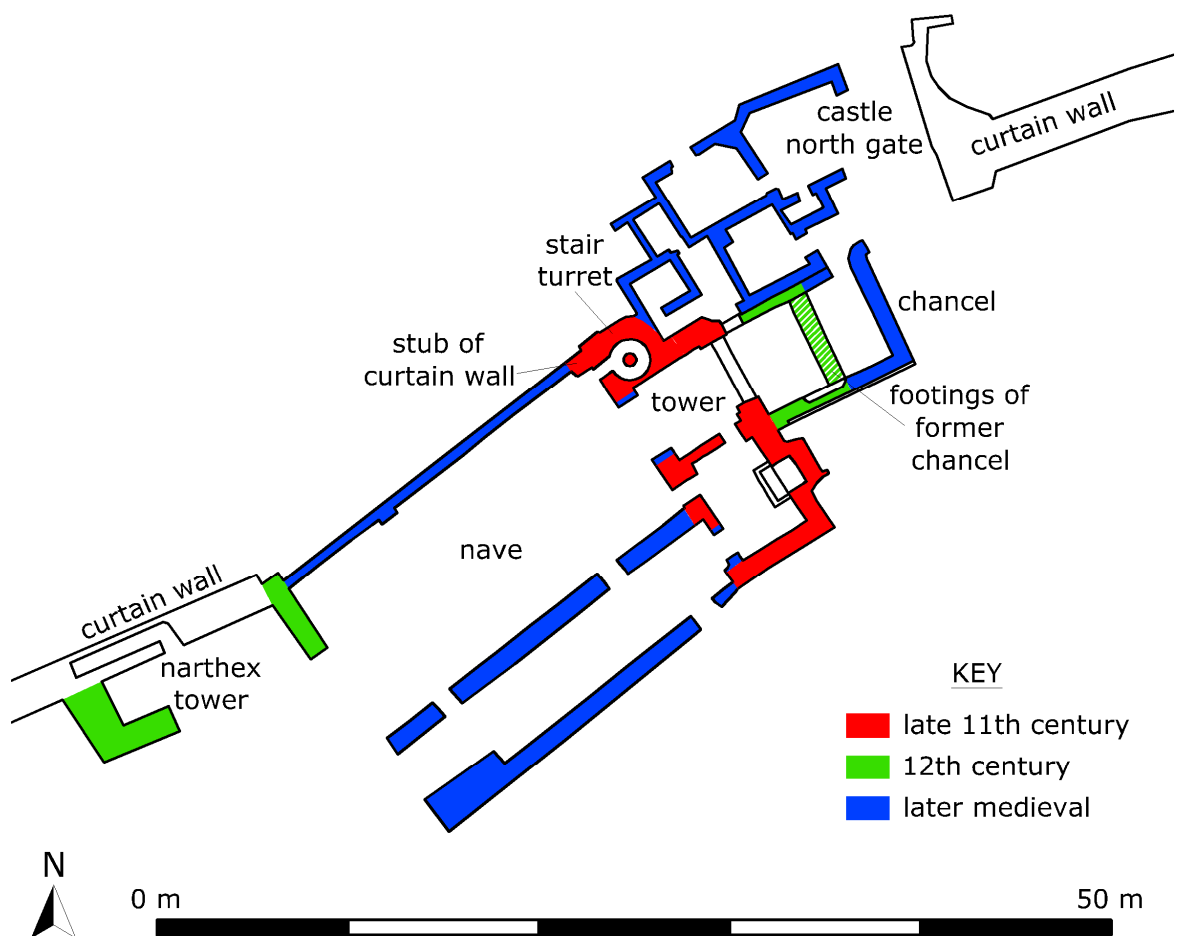


Fig. I.14.2 – Measured phase plan of St Mary's church

The church tower and stair turret

The oldest part of the church is its central tower. It measures 6.20 m north/south by 6.60 m east/west externally with walls thicknesses of 1.20 m (north), 1.55 m (east), 0.55 m (south) and 1.20 m (west). Its west and north walls are the most complete, and it survives to a maximum height of 10.30 m. Its fabric contains a remarkable variety of stone-types,

which are not identified here, but which have been recorded relative to one another on the west elevation drawing (fig. I.14.3). It is, however, worth noting the presence of Caen stone, which is indicative of a Norman date. There is a stair-turret at the north wall of the tower: it measures 3.40 m north/south by 3.95 m east/west externally, with a stair-passage 0.75 m wide. It is constructed from the same fabric as the rest of the tower, and contains much herringbone-work in its stair passage. The stair is distinctively early medieval in design with an ashlar newel-column 0.70 m in diameter from which springs a rubble vault on which the stair treads rest (fig. I.14.3). The 1824 excavation uncovered 24 surviving steps (Dawson 1909, 505).



Fig. I.14.3 – **Left:** The north elevation of the stair turret. **Right:** The construction of the stair-turret, showing the steps separate from the newel.

Tower north elevation

The external north elevation of the tower largely inaccessible. Its western half, containing the stair-turret, lies in private gardens and only its upper half is visible (fig. I.14.3). Interestingly it incorporates a buttress at its western corner which stands to a height of 9.4 m: the buttress formerly extended west as the castle curtain wall, and is discussed below. The salient point here is that it appears to be bonded into, and contemporary with, the main body of the stair turret. The top of this buttress coincides with a reduction in the thickness of the stair-turret wall. A single narrow rectangular flat-headed window *c.* 1m tall is visible lighting the stair above this level: a second such window lies lower down in the eastern side of the turret, *c.* 4.7 m above ground level.

The stair turret and the north wall of the tower are bonded with one another. The fragmentary remains of a transverse rib-vault joins the two (fig. I.14.4), which belongs to a later chapel on the north side of the tower. A blocked round-headed doorway is shown in this location on a 1759 view of the castle (Dawson 1909, 504) (fig. I.14.5): the drawing is inaccurate in other respects, so this doorway has presumably been misinterpreted from the remains of the vault. There is also no evidence for a former opening on the internal (southern) elevation of the wall.

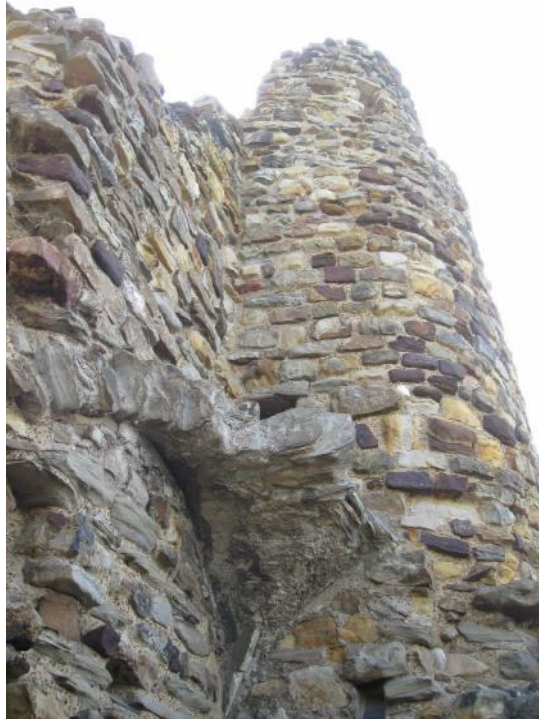


Fig. I.14.4 – The junction between the stair-turret and the church tower north wall.

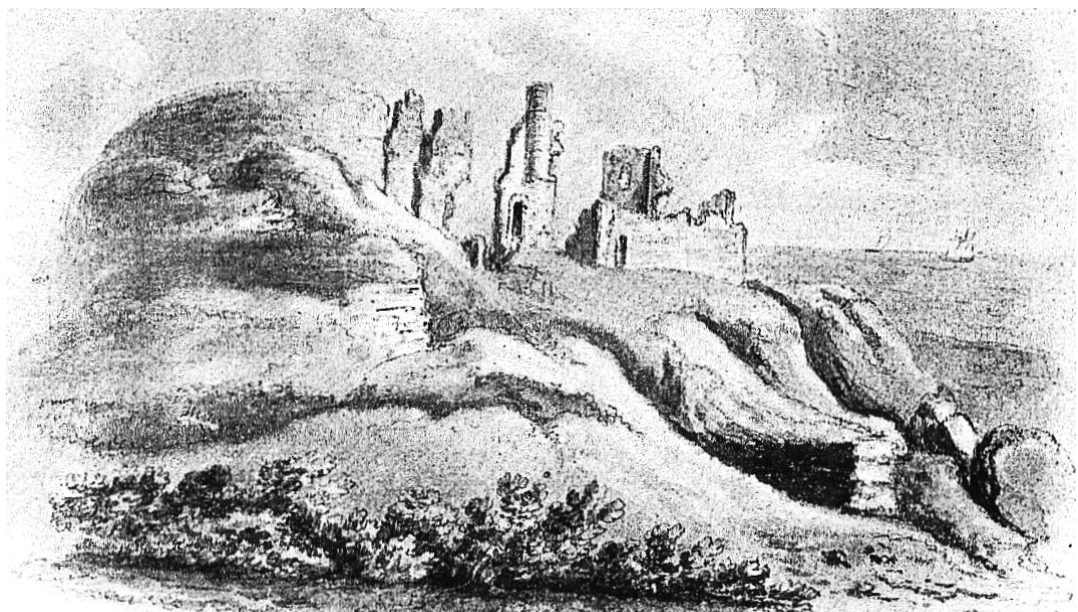


Fig. I.14.5 – The castle from the north by S. H. Grimm, 1789 (Dawson 1909 504).

Tower east elevation

The east wall of the tower, where it joins the chancel, is largely absent (fig. I.14.1). A stub of the wall survives at ground level on its northern side: the fabric of the wall above preserves the scar of its former location. This northern stub is interesting on two accounts. Firstly, it is well faced, implying that it preserves the northern reveal of the absent chancel-arch. Secondly, what little survives of the east face of this stub is equally well-dressed even below the level of the later steps into the northern vaulted chapel. These steps abut this wall-stub, but are bonded into the north wall of the chancel to the east of the tower. (fig. I.14.6). This implies that the present chancel is a later addition to the tower. A stub of the tower east wall also survives at the tower's southeast corner; it consists of wall-core only and is difficult to interpret, but it appears to be of one build. The footings of the wall are partially visible, allowing this southern stub to be reconstructed and its course to be traced.



Fig. I.14.6 – The north internal elevation of the tower, with the stair-turret rearing up in the top left corner of the photograph. The northeast corner of the tower abuts steps which are bonded into the north wall of the chancel to the east of the tower (indicated).

Tower south elevation

The external south wall of the tower only partially survives, and is divided by the ruined doorway into the south transept. The eastern half of the wall is represented by a stub of wall core which appears to be bonded with the east wall of the south transept (fig. I.14.7, left). The footings of this stub survive, showing its original plan and indicating that it formed the straight east jamb of the doorway into the south transept.



Fig. I.14.7 – Left: The east wall of the south transept, showing the junction with the southeast corner of the tower. **Right:** The western half of the south wall of the tower, at its junction with the west wall of the transept.

The western half of the tower south wall survives better (fig. I.14.7, right). It appears to abut the west wall of the south transept, which indicates the former presence of a wide arch with thick piers linking the tower with the south transept. This was subsequently blocked with a narrow wall, leaving only a doorway. The north reveal of the doorway between the south transept and the church nave (fig. I.14.7, right) shows no breaks in construction, confirming that the entire south wall of the tower is of one build and is bonded with the south transept.

Tower west elevation

The west wall of the tower is the clearest and best-preserved part of the church (figs I.14.8 & I.14.10). It has three surviving openings: an Early English tower-arch and doorways to the stair-turret and the south transept. The jambs of the Early English tower-arch are ashlar and sit uncomfortably with the fabric of the wall, confirming that

it is a later insertion. The doorways which flanked it have ashlar jambs and megalithic flat lintels, and there is no indication that they are later insertions. There are several apparent horizontal breaks of construction in the south wall, which are also visible from within the tower. They occur at 3.0 m and 6.0 m above ground level; at 9.0 m the wall of the stair-turret steps back on each of its other faces, implying a break in construction here too. The regularity of these levels and relative homogeneity of their stone-types indicates that these are seasonal building campaigns, not different construction phases.



Fig. I.14.8 – West external elevation of the tower, from the later nave



Fig. I.14.9 – The junction of the north wall of the nave with the west wall of the tower/stair turret. The nave wall is narrower than the scar of the former castle curtain wall, on which the nave wall is constructed (indicated).

At the north end of the elevation is the scar of a wall approximately 1 m thick, which is bonded with the rest of the elevation and which terminates as the buttress visible in the north elevation of the stair turret (fig. I.14.3). The north wall of the present nave is narrower than this wall and abuts it: a stub of the old wall survives at the bottom of the elevation, which the nave wall re-uses as a foundation (fig. I.14.9). This wall is too tall to have belonged to a previous nave (figs I.14.8 & I.14.10), and must instead be the original north curtain wall of the castle. This further confirms that the tower and its stair-turret is contemporary with the original castle enclosure.

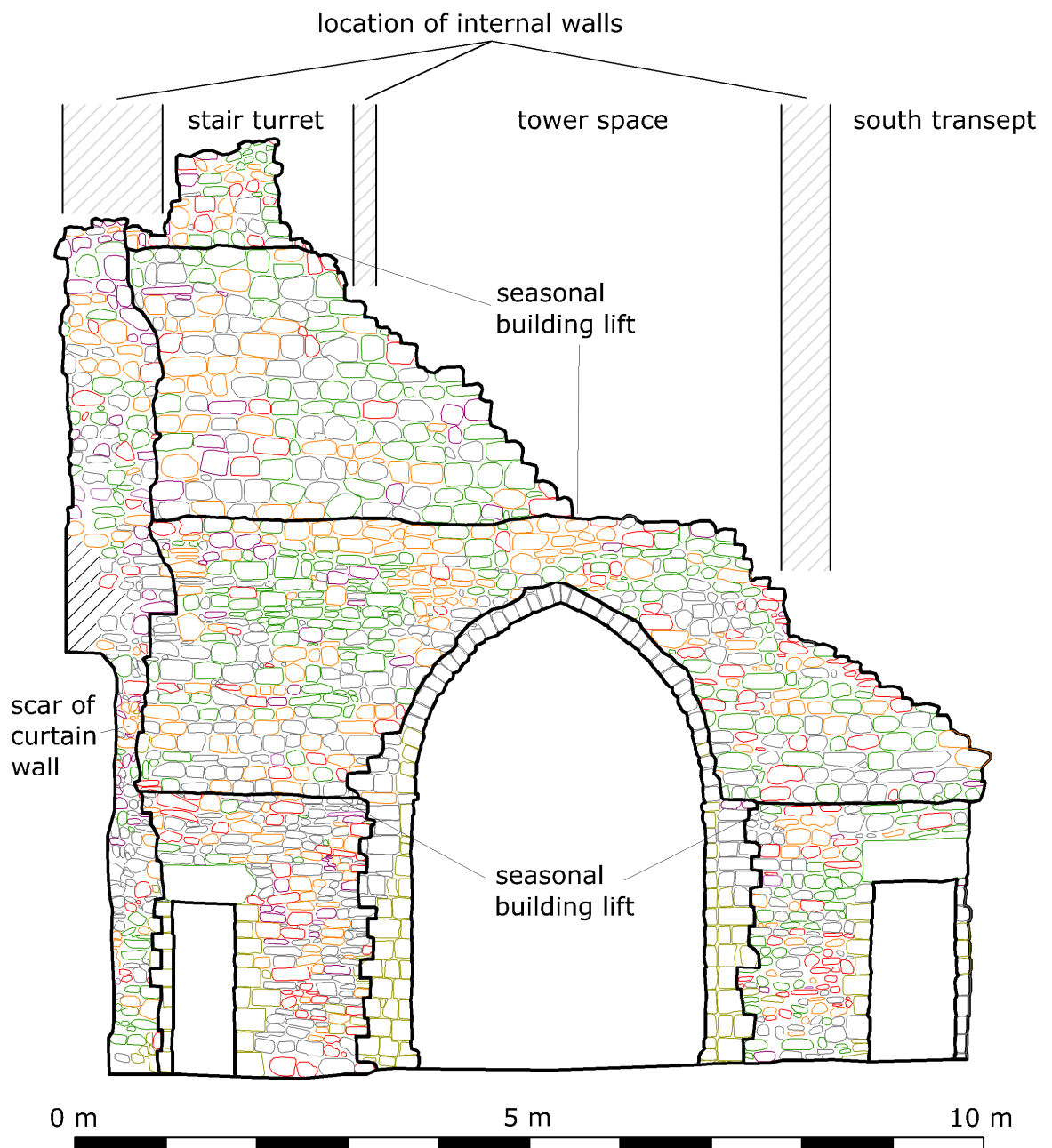


Fig. I.14.10 – Drawing of the west external elevation of the tower

The south transept

The south transept appears to be contemporary with the tower. Its walls are of the same thickness as those of the tower, and are constructed from similar fabric. Its east wall, which is abutted by the south wall of the chancel, contains a round-headed altar alcove accessed up a flight of two steps (fig. I.14.11). It is 1.60 m wide and 1.15 m deep and sits within the thickness of the wall, which steps back to accommodate it. Its northern jamb and voussoirs are of ashlar construction whilst its central and southern voussoirs and south jamb are rubble. Additionally, its altar-block is bonded with the southern half of the wall, but has a vertical break with the northern. This suggests that the altar has been converted from a pre-existing alcove, or even a doorway. The transept's south wall is plain; its west wall has an inserted doorway leading to the later nave aisle.



Fig. I.14.11 – Alcove and altar in the east wall of the south transept.

The chancel

The present chancel is on a different alignment to the tower (fig. I.14.2), it abuts the tower's east wall (fig. I.14.6), and it is wider than the main body of the tower. These irregularities imply that the chancel is a later addition, perhaps a replacement for the more modest predecessor apparently depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. I.14.14). The present chancel was extended from 4.55 m to 8.20 m in the later medieval period.

The nave and south aisle

The present nave and south aisle are later additions to the tower. The nave has been dated to the early 13th century on the basis of the surviving tower-arch. Alcoves for the seating of the college canons survive in the fabric of its north wall; only a few courses of its south wall and none of its west wall survives above ground level. A pair of 12th century towers lay to the west of the nave, of which the northern survives relatively intact. They are on a very different alignment to both the nave and the earlier central tower (fig. I.14.2), and are thought to be the remains of an elaborate narthex or vestibule (Dawson 1909 495; Harris 2010, 33). They are later than the castle's curtain wall, but earlier than the 13th century arch between the nave and the tower, implying that the inserted tower-arch is not contemporary with the present nave. There is no sign of a previous nave having adjoined the fabric of the west wall of the tower. Since the construction of the present nave involved the partial dismantling of the north curtain wall of the castle, and since the west towers and narthex are stratigraphically later than the north curtain wall, it is probable that the church had no nave until the present one was constructed, probably at the same time as the western narthex towers.

A complex of secondary rooms and chapels lies on the north side of the church, abutting the east wall of the stair turret and the north wall of the chancel (fig. I.14.2). They incorporate part of the structure of the castle north gate. They are of later medieval construction and were not accessible for survey, so are not described here.

Phasing and dating the church fabric (fig. I.14.2)

The earliest part of the present church is the central tower, north stair turret and south transept, which appear to be of a single phase of construction. A chancel is likely to have lain to the east, although there is no surviving evidence for it. There is no evidence for a nave to the west at this time. This earliest phase of construction can be dated to the early Norman period on the basis of its use of Caen stone and ashlar masonry. The Anglo-Saxon method of the construction of its stair turret (fig. I.14.3), with separate newel, vault and steps implies a date soon after the Conquest (Parsons 1978). This is also indicated by the simple, megalithic construction of the doors in its west wall (figs I.14.8–I.14.10), and the fact that the stair turret is incorporated into the castle's north curtain wall. It is strikingly similar to the church depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. I.14.15), with its square tower, transept and circular northern turret.

The church subsequently gained a nave, west towers, a narthex and the present chancel, later extended. Assuming the nave is contemporary with the narthex and west

towers, a 12th century date is likely. The chancel is not directly dateable, but the addition of the nave is a likely context for its rebuilding. The present tower-arch, south aisle and northern chapels were added in the 13th century and later.

The documentary evidence

Seint Aedward le Rei

There is evidence for a pre-existing tower-nave church at Hastings Castle in Matthew Paris' mid-13th century poem *Seint Aedward le Rei*:

Duke William shows this scandal to Pope Alexander and to King Philip of France, and prays him to assist him to avenge his wrong and conquer his right by means of battle and war. He then prepares a fleet, treasure and knights, and comes to St Valery. And when he has [a favourable] wind and calm weather, he crosses the sea and arrives in England. And when he came to shore, he builds (?fortifies) and rebuilds (?renovates/re-founds) a tower that the duke names 'Hastings'.

Ducs Willame cest eschandre muster a la pape Alisandre e a Phillippe rois de France, e prie ke il li avance sun tort venger e droit cunquere par force de bataille e guerre. Aparaille lors navie, tresor e chevalerie, e vent a Seint Valeri. E quant ad vent e tens seri, mer passé, en Engleterre arrive. E quant est venuz a la rive, une tur ferme e re[n]uvele ke li ducs "Hastinges" apele.

(*Seint Aedward le Rei*, lines 4330-4336; Wallace 1983, 122; kindly translated by Jane Gilbert, Dept. of French, University College London).

Although this is a late source, it contains the tantalising detail that there was a tower already at Hastings when William arrived, and that he rebuilt or renovated it as part of the new castle. Of course the 'tower' could simply refer to the castle keep itself, depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry, but then a second tower must also have been present since it is most unlikely that the castle keep pre-dates the Conquest. The curious phrase 'builds and rebuilds a tower' supports this: William built one tower – a keep – and rebuilt another, presumably St Mary's church. Both may be depicted side-by-side on the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. I.14.12).

The documented origins of St Mary's church

The documentary evidence may suggest a pre-Conquest foundation date for St Mary's church. A charter of Count Henry of Eu (1095-1140) states that his predecessor, Robert of Eu, was 'founder and builder of the church of St Mary of Hastyng' (Peckham 1942/3, 299-302). However, a petition of 1299 made by the canons of the college states that

Robert had simply enriched the institution, and that it had originally been founded by, or was possibly a memorial to, Alfred the Atheling, brother of Edward the Confessor. This would presumably have occurred in the second quarter of the 11th century (Gardiner 1989). A deed of Henry IV (1399-1413) records that the Bishop of Selsey had a church of St Mary in the castle prior to its refoundation as a college when the holding passed to Robert of Eu (Dawson 1909, 21). Finally, William of Poitiers (*Gesta Guillelmi* ii. 14; Davis and Chibnall 1998, 124-5) describes Duke William as celebrating mass in the Castle the evening before battle, which implies that a church already existed at this time.

The evidence of the Bayeux Tapestry



Fig. I.14.12 – The construction of Hastings Castle on the *Bayeux Tapestry* (Wilson 1985, plate 50).

A. J. Taylor (1966) first suggested identified the church of St Mary at Hastings castle with the free-standing tower depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. I.14.12). Combes and Lyne (1995, esp. 216) have questioned the identification of the Tapestry's *Hestinga Ceastra* with Hastings castle as part of their wider theory that the *Burghal Hidage* town of *Haestingaceastre* was not located at Hastings, but ten miles away at Pevensey. Central to their argument is the reference of 'ceastra' place-names to Roman sites,

although there are exceptions to this (Smith 1956, 85). There is no evidence for Roman occupation at Hastings, whilst there is an early Norman castle within the Roman shore-fort at Pevensey. Having said this, Hastings has suffered from extensive coastal erosion since the early medieval period, so Roman occupation may have formerly existed at or near the castle site.

There is clear evidence for castles at *both* Pevensey and Hastings at the time of the Norman Conquest. In the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* (c. 1067), the earliest known written account of the invasion, Guy of Amiens records work on the fortifications at both Hastings and Pevensey. After his victory, William gave Pevensey castle to Count Robert of Eu, whilst Hastings castle remained in the hands of Humphrey of Tilleul-en-Auge until 1069; according to Orderic Vitalis, Humphrey had been responsible for the castle since the earliest days of its construction (Davison 1909, 17). Orderic also records that Harold had protected his harbours at both Pevensey and Hastings in 1066, before slighting the fortifications at each (Davison 1909, 565). So which of these two castles does the Bayeux Tapestry depict at '*Hestinga Ceastra*'? Compellingly, the Tapestry depicts a motte and reads 'this man ordered that a castle be dug at *Hestinga Ceastra*' (*iste iussit ut foderetur castellum at Hestinga Ceastra*; Wilson 1985, plate 50). There is no motte at Pevensey, and its fortifications were of stone: they already existed, and did not need to be 'dug'. Hastings, on the other hand, has a well-preserved Norman motte and earthwork fortifications of Iron Age origin. Overall, this debate cannot be resolved without excavation, but there remains sufficient doubt to pursue here Taylor's (1966) identification of St Mary's church with the illustrations on the Bayeux Tapestry.

The Bayeux Tapestry depicts the construction of what we are assuming here to be Hastings castle motte, with Duke William looking on (fig. I.14.12). Immediately adjacent is an intact tower, already complete. It stands on a stepped plinth and is divided externally into two stages by a string-course two-thirds of the way up. A second window is present in the upper stage. Both are small, round-headed and off-centre. The upper stage is bisected by a curious diagonal pattern of eight rows of small crosses, which is hard to interpret. It may indicate an external cladding, that the tower was sacred, or that it was circular. The last is the most likely in view of the tower's overhanging conical roof, which is topped by a plain knob or finial. Abutting to the tower on the opposite side to the castle motte is a small single-storey annexe with a pair of small square window-openings and a partially obscured tiled roof. It does not

interrupt the tower's plinth but sits behind it, indicating either that it is narrower than the tower or that it belongs to a second building that lies behind.



Fig. I.14.13 – Plan of Hastings Castle (Barker and Barton 1977, 82).

The topography of Hastings Castle suggests that this scene is viewed from the north. The only buildings within the admittedly much-eroded castle site known to be of a suitably early date belong either to the northern gatehouse or to the collegiate church of St Mary (fig. I.14.13). Of the two, the latter is known to have had a tower from an early date and is by far the more convincing candidate.

Taylor (1966) suggested that the tower was depicted on the Tapestry a second time, when Duke William sets out to battle (fig. I.14.14). The motte is not shown; the scene appears to be viewed from the east with the a wide open gate indicating the north gate of the castle from which William rode northwest to Senlac Hill. The tapestry depicts a free-standing adjunct on the north side of a larger building, suggested as the main body of St Mary's church (Taylor 1966). As depicted, the towers on each of the two images (figs I.14.12 & I.14.14) share a two-stage exterior with a four-stepped plinth and a similar configuration of windows topped by a conical roof bearing a finial. Assuming they are the same tower viewed from different directions, the single-storey western annexe of the earlier image (fig. I.14.12) does indeed stand behind that tower, and belongs to St Mary's church, which stands on the left on the later image (fig. I.14.14). Figure I.14.15 clarifies Taylor's suggestion.



Fig. I.14.14 – The Bayeux Tapestry’s depiction of Duke William setting out to battle (Wilson 1985, plate 51). The church depicted may be St Mary’s, depicted elsewhere on the Tapestry from a different angle (fig. I.14.1).

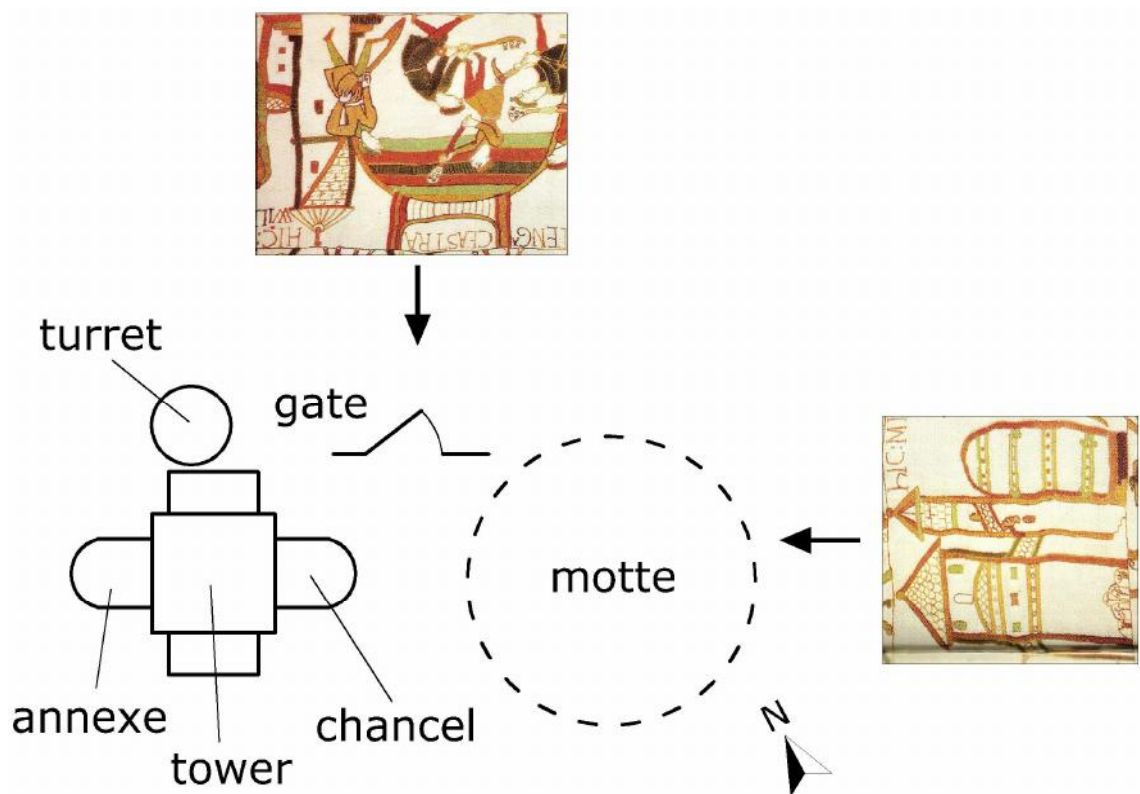


Fig. I.14.15 – Clarification of Taylor’s (1966) suggestion that two scenes in the Bayeux Tapestry (figs I.14.1 & I.14.4) depict Hastings castle (fig. I.14.3) from different angles.

As depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, the main body of St Mary’s church (fig. I.14.14) consists of a central tower, presumably square in plan, of similar height to the adjacent turret (described above). Its lower half is obscured by a structure of similar

width which has three rectangular windows between two decorated string-courses, topped by a domed roof. Its most likely interpretation is a chancel, probably with an apsidal end: a similar level of decoration as is known from the apsidal chancel at late Anglo-Saxon Deerhurst (Rahtz and Watts 1997). The visible upper face of the tower behind has three round-headed windows and a tiled or shingled roof. This is depicted quite differently to the roof of the adjunct turret, further implying that one is the pyramidal cap to a square tower whilst the other is the conical cap to a round one. Finally, the tower is flanked by a pair of narrow aisles with three-stepped plinths and elaborate carvings on their gable-ends. These are unlikely to belong to a wide western nave on the other side of the tower, since the previous depiction of Hastings (fig. I.14.12) reveals this western structure to have been very modest. They may be small transepts to the north and south of the tower.

In conclusion, the Bayeux Tapestry indicates that there was an existing church at Hastings whilst the castle motte there was under construction. It appears to have taken the form of a square central tower with four smaller arms, the eastern of which was a decorated chancel with an apsidal end. Abutting the northern side of the tower was a turriform adjunct of similar height, circular in plan. This second tower is likely to have been a circular stair-turret: it lacks the necessary openings to have been a belltower, which are present on the main tower of the church (fig. I.14.15). This interpretation relies on the assumption that the Bayeux Tapestry shows lifelike buildings rather than *pro forma* representations of standard building types (discussed in section 6.2.1). There is a case to be made for the veracity of the Tapestry's depictions of Hastings, but it needs to be tested against the available documentary and structural evidence.

Conclusion: the pictorial, documentary and physical evidence for St Mary's

The surviving fabric of the St Mary's church indicates that its original form was a tower with a chancel, south transept and circular stair-turret to the north. This fabric is early Norman in date, contemporary with the construction of the castle. The documentary evidence also indicates a pre-Norman church at Hastings, which had – or comprised of – a tower. The Bayeux Tapestry depicts a completed church at *Hestinga Ceastra* – taken here to be Hastings – in 1066, at the time the castle was constructed. It appears to have been a tower-nave with a circular turret, which echoes the surviving structural evidence.

Discussion

The tower in context

Early medieval Hastings

The town of Hastings is presently centred on the western side of West Hill, the site of both the castle and an Iron Age hillfort. A second hillfort lay on East Hill a short distance to the east (fig. I.14.16). The nature and extent of early medieval occupation of the town is obscure, which is not helped by its omission from the *Domesday Book*. There is also very little archaeological evidence from this period, so it is fortunate that a certain amount of documentary evidence survives.

The town derives its name from its location within the territory occupied by the *gens Hestingorum*, a subject people of the South Saxons first recorded in 771 (Mawer and Stenton 1930, xxii-xxiv). The town is first mentioned in the *Burghal Hidage* as *Haestingaceastre* c. 900, although the exact location of the fort is unknown. Combes and Lyne (1995) have suggested that the *Haestingaceastre* was in fact located at Pevensey, and that what is presently Hastings only grew up in the Norman period. This theory has been critiqued elsewhere (Gardiner 2000, 88-9; 2003, 157; Fradley and Newsome 2007, 26; Harris 2010, 15), and does not significantly affect interpretation of St Mary's tower-nave. Assuming the *Burghal Hidage* fort to indeed have been at Hastings, it may have been located within the Iron Age defences of either East or West Hills (Harris 2010, 35): Hastings castle is located at the superb defensive former Iron Age hillfort on West Hill, whilst there is archaeological evidence for a late Anglo-Saxon cemetery on East Hill (Fradley and Newsome 2007) and limited excavation there uncovered a single sherd of 10th or 11th century West Sussex ware (Pontin 1989).

Haestingaceastre is mentioned again in a text of c. 930 (Combes and Lynn 1995, 215); it had become a mint by the mid-10th century and emerged as a significant port in the succeeding decades (Harris 2010, 15). Perhaps for this reason it was overrun by the Vikings in 1011, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. By the middle of the 11th century Hastings had become a centre of naval power: the *Chronicle* for 1049 tells us that the men of Hastings had a duty to serve the king on board their own ships, and that ships from Hastings were assembled by Earl Godwine during his revolt against the king in 1052. Hastings was central to the organisation of the Anglo-Saxon navy (Hollister 1962, 116-9), and went on to head the list of the post-Conquest Cinque Ports, which were themselves of considerable naval significance (Harris 2010, 16).

Hastings castle

Hastings is likely to have been a strategically important place during the late Anglo-Saxon period, so it is unfortunate for the interpretation of St Mary's church that the location of the *Burghal Hidage* fort is uncertain. It is nevertheless unsurprising that Duke William advanced there in 1066 rather than remaining at Pevensey, where he had landed on the 28th September. Various documentary sources relate that he began work on a fortification at Hastings immediately upon his arrival (rehearsed in Dawson 1909); he advanced to Senlac Hill from Hastings on the morning of the 14th October, and spent a further five days at Hastings after the battle. He then left for London leaving the castle in the hands of Humphrey of Tilleul-en-Auge who, according to Orderic Vitalis, had been responsible for it since the earliest days of its construction. Whatever temporary works had been undertaken prior to October 14th continued; the castle was granted, along with the honour and rape of Hastings, to Count Robert of Eu in 1069 (Harris 2010, 17-18).

Duke William refurbished an existing fortification for the construction of his castle. The Tapestry reads 'this man ordered that a castle be dug at Hastings Castle' (*iste iussit ut foderetur castellum at Hestinga Ceastra*; Wilson 1985, plate 50), which implies a pre-existing fortification. This accords with Guy of Amiens' reference to the 'restoration' (*reformas*; Barlow 1999, 11) of the fortifications at Hastings. William of Poitiers' *Gesta Guillelmi* (ii. 9-10) mentions that William 'occupied' (*occupauere*) the fortifications at Hastings before refusing to take refuge behind its 'ditch or walls' (*ualli aut moenum*) prior to battle (Davis and Chibnall 1998, 114-7). This again implies the existence of a functioning stronghold prior to 14th October 1066. This may simply refer to the Iron Age hillfort on West Hill, or to Hastings' putative *Burghal Hidage* fort, or both. Either way, assuming St Mary's church was indeed of pre-Conquest origin, it seems to have been located to mark or protect the entrance to a functioning Anglo-Saxon fortification overlooking a strategic town and port.

The tower in its landscape*Communication routes*

St Mary's would have made a poor watchtower, despite its lofty position on West Hill. Hastings would formerly have communicated with Watling Street, and on to London, via a Roman road (M 13), but its course is not followed by present roads or parish boundaries, indicating that it fell out of use in the post-Roman period. This is perhaps

unsurprising in view of the fact that Hastings was probably not a place of much significance until the late Anglo-Saxon period.

In view of its suggested role as a *Burghal Hideage* fort, late Anglo-Saxon Hastings is likely to have been connected with the regional road network (discussed by Baker and Brookes 2011). The Bayeux Tapestry implies that William commandeered St Mary's tower as his pre-battle headquarters (figs I.14.12 & I.14.14) (Taylor 1966), but it would in reality have made a poor watchtower over the roads along which Harold would approach from the north. It would, however, have given warning against any Anglo-Saxon seaborne attack.

Assembly-sites

Hastings originally lay in the Anglo-Saxon hundred of Baldslow (*Baldeslei* 1086), 'Beald's hill' (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 501, 534). The meeting-place was located at Baldslow Hill itself, which lay on the edge of St Mary's parish, at the junction of four parishes and two early regional routes. The medieval hundred-house lay adjacent (East Sussex HER nos MES928 & MES15539). The hill would have been intervisible with St Mary's church.

Beacon sites

The late medieval beacon system of Sussex has been studied Frank Kitchen (1986). Two sites west of Hastings, Wartling and Burwash, are associated with much older beacon place-names; the latter also contains the Old English element '*burh*' and may have been fortified from an early date. These sites also communicate with a more certain early beacon-chain a few miles to the west, around East Dean [9] and Jevington [17]. A further two of the later beacons lay at early medieval meeting-places, which is a possible indication of their antiquity. We can be confident that there was an early beacon system in the vicinity of Hastings, but its extent remain uncertain. It must also be emphasised that there has been significant coastal erosion in the Hastings area over the past millennium, which means that further sites may have been lost to the sea.

Fortifications

St Mary's lay in a fortified place, but there is no indication that it visually articulated with other early medieval fortifications in the locality.

Estates

Gardiner (1989) has made a study of the lands likely to have been belonged to St Mary's from the time of its original foundation, whether this was in the early Norman period or before. It is clear that St Mary's tower of did not act as a territorial marker over them.

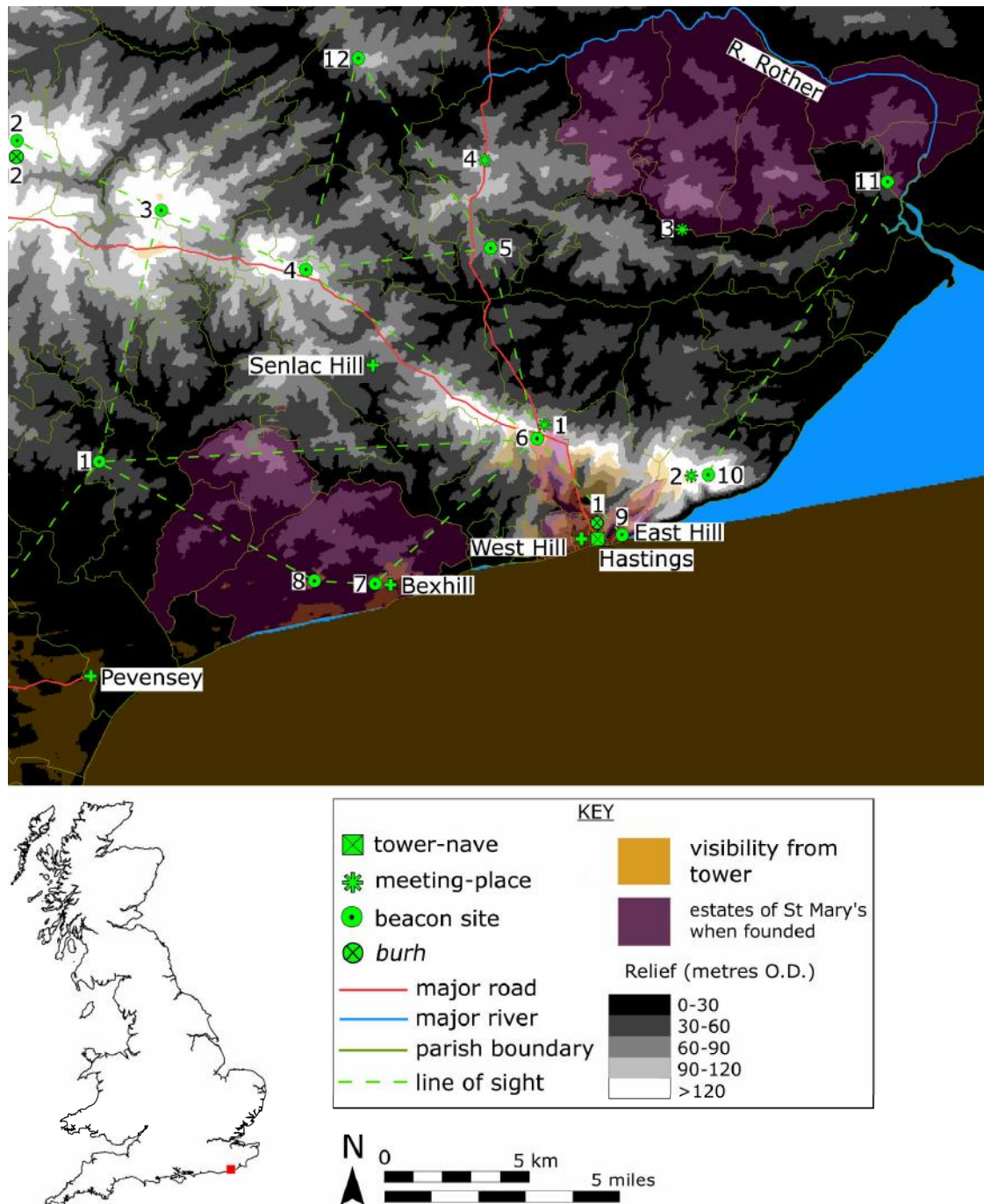


Fig. I.14.16 – The landscape context of Hastings

Key to fig. I.14.16

Assembly-sites

1. Baldslow Hill
2. Guestling Hundred met near the church at Fairlight (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 507).

3. Gostrow Hundred met at the Hundred House in Brede (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 514).
4. Staple Hundred met at Staple Cross in Ewhurst (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 518).

Beacons

1. Wartling is recorded as a beacon in 1617 (Kitchen 1986, 189). The 'ware' element in its early place-name (*Werlinges* 1086; *Wareling* 1201) (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 483) is potentially indicative of an Anglo-Saxon origin.
2. Burwash had a beacon by 1586 (Kitchen 1986, 189). It lies adjacent to Tottingworth (*Totingwerthe* 1248) (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 467) which is a potentially early beacon place-name.
3. Brightling had a beacon by 1596 (Kitchen 1986, 188).
4. Nertherfield in Battle is recorded had a beacon by 1639 (Kitchen 1986, 189).
5. Sedlescombe had a beacon at Stapley Beacon by 1595 (Kitchen 1986, 189).
6. Baldslow Hill in Hastings had a beacon by 1595 (Kitchen 1986, 188).
7. Bexhill had a second beacon by 1595 (Kitchen 1986, 188).
8. Cooden Down in Bexhill had a beacon by 1587 (Kitchen 1986, 188).
9. East Hill, Hastings had a medieval or early post-medieval beacon within a rectangular earthwork (Fradley and Newsome 2007, 27).
10. There was a beacon in Fairlight by 1574 (Kitchen 1986, 188).
11. There was a beacon in Playden by 1596 (Kitchen 1986, 188).
12. There was a beacon on Silver Hill, Salehurst by 1595 (Kitchen 1986, 189).

Fortifications

1. Hastings is listed on the *Burghal Hidage*.
2. Burwash (*Burgers(a)* 12th century) (Mawer and Stenton 1930, 461).

Conclusion

St Mary's church was constructed as a tower-nave church within the Norman castle of Hastings soon after the Conquest. Documentary evidence suggests that it was the direct successor of an Anglo-Saxon foundation, constructed in honour of the brother of Edward the Confessor. There is also documentary evidence that Hastings Castle was a pre-existing fortification, possibly a *Burghal Hideage* fort, which was adapted into William the Conqueror's castle. The church lay at the gate of this fortification. It would have made a poor inland watchtower but an excellent one over the sea, which is perhaps unsurprising considering Hastings' strategic maritime importance in late Anglo-Saxon and Norman England. This said, it was intervisible with its nearby hundred meeting-place and could have kept watch over a probable early beacon system in the area. It would have made a poor territorial marker.